



The Brahmo Samaj.  
DISCOURSES AND WRITINGS.

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KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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PART. I.

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## P R E F A C E .

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The present volume is a reprint of the Minister's "Discourses and Writings" with a little additional matter,—the report of two important meetings of the Brahmo Somaj of India. There is still plenty of matter in the old volumes of the *Indian Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* which we hope to publish as the second volume of the Minister's "Discourses and Writings."

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# DISCOURSES AND WRITINGS.

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## THE BRAHMO SOMAJ

OR

## THEISM IN INDIA.

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RAM MOHAN ROY. \*

It is a truth which the world's history has well verified that great men represent certain great ideas, the realization of which constitutes the very destiny and mission of their existence. In fact, this is the grand peculiarity of men of genius which distinguishes them from ordinary men. The latter, justly called the "anonymous beings of the human species," live and act for self and under the iron sway of circumstances, and, when they close their career, leave not a vestige behind to serve as their memorial. Great men, on the contrary, live for the world, and not on their own account, they rise superior to circumstances, and, by force of manly will and in the face of the stoutest resistance, stamp on the age the noble ideas of their soul, leaving an everlasting and priceless heritage to posterity and to all mankind. They "live and move and have their being" in those ideas. The power and influence they exhibit are not their own; they belong to those ideas entrusted to them by

\* *Fortnightly Indian Mirror*, 1865.



Providence as their sacred errand on earth. They are missionaries of great truths and, therefore, not unfrequently prove martyrs in the cause to which their very lives are inviolably pledged. The biography of great men should, therefore, be studied with special reference to the ideas which they represent in the stage of history, and for which they receive endless glory from mankind as their tribute of gratitude.

Among India's great men Ram Mohun Roy holds a high rank. Like all great men he brought into the world his own idea and devoted his life to its realization. That idea was *catholic worship*. Whoever has deeply studied his life and carefully looked into his speculations and movements, cannot but admit this to have been his guiding principle. That he was a religious reformer of India is universally admitted, and as such he is universally admired. He is also reputed as an extraordinary theologian. He knew English, Arabic, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and his writings bear testimony to his vast and varied learning. He it was who abolished the obnoxious custom of Suttee; he was one of the foremost pioneers of native education, and his name also figures in the valuable suggestions he offered in furtherance of the reforms which took place in the early political administration of this country. But such compliments to his great mind do not mark the real secret of his excellence: they do not point to *the* ruling principle of his mind which constitutes his greatness. His name shines in undying glory not only in India but in England and America for the valuable theological works which his mastermind indited, and religious and social reforms which his philanthropic heart promoted; but the real mission of his life, his peculiar ideal, so far as appears to us on careful analysis, was to give to the world a system of catholic worship. This, as we shall presently show, was prominently

exhibited in the establishment of the church or place of worship which was subsequently designated the *Brahmo Somaj*.

From his very early days, Ram Mohun Roy's mind manifested a strong and unmistakable religious tendency, while yet a boy he appeared to be a staunch follower of Vishnu, and his first duty every morning was to recite a chapter of the Bhagabat. But his giant mind was not to be long in fetters, born as it was for the noblest type of religious independence. When about the age of *sixteen* he composed a manuscript calling in question the validity of Hindu idolatry, and thereby boldly and distinctly avowed his renunciation of the religion of his forefathers; the result was, as might be anticipated, disagreement with his near relatives. To use his own words: "This together with my known sentiments on that subject having produced a coldness between me and my immediate kindred, I proceeded on my travels." He travelled through several places of Northern India, cultivating theological studies and making theological researches, and spent three years in Thibet where also his anti-idolatrous proclivities excited the anger of the worshippers of Lama. On his return he was taken back by his father and restored to his favour. But his obstinate and unflinching aversion to superstition and superstitious practices soon rekindled the spirit of persecution; and he was again deserted by his father and his near relations. The death of his father, which took place in the year 1803, furnished an impetus to more independent and bold movements in carrying out his cherished ideas. His opposition to the advocates of idolatry was now open and fearless and he at once commenced a series of publications in the native and foreign languages against the pernicious errors and absurdities of idolatry. His publications are numerous and abound in singularly

cogent and lucid arguments and one has merely to read them to be convinced of their value.

His Persian work *Tuhfut-ul-Mowahedeen* (a present to Unitarians), his three Appeals to the Christian public, his work on the Vedanta and discussions with eminent Brahminical Pundits are masterly treatises which shew the uncommon and varied theological erudition of the author. He spared no system of idolatry. He directed his able pen in exposing and denouncing, in no measured terms, the idolatrous prejudices of Hinduism, Mahomedanism and Christianity. But at the same time he culled together passages from these scriptures inculcating Monotheism. Thus he proved a friend and foe to each of the three principal religious systems of the world.

An unsparing and thorough-going iconoclast, he yet failed not to extract the simple and saving truth of monotheism from every creed with a view to lead every religious sect with the light of its *own* religion to abjure idolatry and acknowledge the One Supreme. He went through the Hindu, Mahomedan and Christian scriptures with indefatigable perseverance, and set forth the unity of God from the teachings of these books, while he argued away with unsurpassed ingenuity and erudition all doctrines inculcating polytheism. A careful study of all his published writings will clearly show this two-fold policy of his theological argumentation. Thus while he evinced respect for every creed and aversion to every form of idolatry, and thereby excited and disarmed in turn the antagonism of his adversaries, his real faith lay shrouded in a vale of mystery which made it wholly unintelligible to them. Hence conflicting opinions were put forth as to the creed which he professed. The Mahomedans claimed him as one of their sect, and gave him the title of Moulvie ; some regarded

him as a Christian ; others a Hindu of the Vedantic and primitive type. And yet nothing is more obvious than that Ram Mohan Roy was neither a Hindu, nor a Christian, nor a Mahomedan, although he partially identified himself with each of these denominations ; else why the bitter invectives and thundering fulminations which were heaped upon him from all sides, and the grave charges of atheist, *mlechcha*, free-thinker and infidel which were laid at his doors ? To this day his creed is a standing mystery, and the world seems to be hopelessly disagreed as to what his real convictions were. His published writings—those stupendous monuments of his theological attainments—far from throwing any light on this complicated problem, show grave anomalies and inconsistencies which serve only to aggravate the difficulties of its problem. Nor do those of his enlightened contemporaries and friends who are still living, seem to possess any definite ideas on the subject. To us it appears strange that the real creed of such a great reformer and extraordinary theologian, should be a subject of such wild surmises and conflicting opinions and even of severe criticism, especially when we recollect that scarcely a third of a century has elapsed since his demise, and his writings and doings are still in the possession of the present generation with all the weight of historic evidence, it is no less a matter of regret that many were led, in the absence of a satisfactory solution of the problem, to infer that Ram Mohan Roy had no positive religious convictions whatever, that he was simply a free-thinker and a roving adventurer in the domains of theology : that all that he desired or was able to do was to protest against this or that system of idolatry, and that he studiously concealed his real faith from the public eye with a view to win the esteem of all religious denominations, instead of exciting opposition by a

manly and defiant exposition of his heterodox and unpopular views.

Verily the grand idea of Ram Mohun Roy's mind has eluded the observation of his shrewdest critics, and prejudices and unwarrantable inferences have resulted from a partial research into his speculations. In that idea all seeming anomalies must blend together in a sublime consistency, and all discrepancies find a harmonious unity. So long as the real secret of his mind is not apprehended in all its comprehensiveness and greatness, his theological speculations will continue to be an intricate problem. It is only when the central truth is discovered that all the apparent divergences and wanderings may be harmonized together and perfected into consistency and integrity. As we have already remarked, the ruling idea of his mind was *to promote the universal worship of the One Supreme Creator, the Common Father of mankind*. This catholic idea, while it led him to embrace all creeds and all sects in his comprehensive scheme of faith and worship, precluded the possibility of his being classified with any particular religious denomination. His eclectic soul spurned sectarian bondage ; it apprehended in the unity of the God-head the indissoluble fraternity of all mankind. He belonged to no existing sect, nor did he seek to found a new sect or originate a new creed, however refined and unexceptionable. His great ambition was to bring together men of all existing religious persuasions, irrespective of the distinctions of caste, colour or creed, into a system of universal worship of the One True God. Thus his catholic heart belonged to no sect, and to every sect ; he was a member of no church and yet of all churches. He felt it his mission to construct a Universal Church based on the principle of Unitarian worship. His earlier controversies and discussions with the different

religious sects exhibit but partial glimpses or dim forebodings of that grand scheme which was subsequently matured and perfected in his mind. Its fullest development and final realization was consummated, in the fulness of time, in the establishment of that institution which bears the name of the Brahmo Somaj and which stands as a memorable monument of the founder's real creed—*Ram Mohun Roy's grand idea realized*. The trust-deed of the Somaj premises contains, we believe, the clearest exposition of his idea, and will, it is hoped if duly appreciated, settle all contested points regarding that illustrious man's religious convictions. It provides that :

" The said message or building, land, tenements hereditaments and premises with their appurtenances should be used, occupied, enjoyed, applied and appropriated as, and for, *a place of public meeting of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction* as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly sober religious and devout manner *for the worship and adoration of the eternal, unsearchable and immutable Being Who is the Author and Preserver of the universe* not under or by any other name, designation or title peculiarly used for, and applied to, any particular being or beings by any man or set of men whatsoever and that no graven image, statue, or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait or the likeness of anything shall be admitted within the said message, buliding, land, tenements hereditaments and premises and that no sacrifice offering or oblation of any kind or thing shall ever be permitted therein and that no animal or living creature shall within or on the said message, building, land, tenements, hereditaments, and premises be deprived of life either for religious purposes or for food and that no eating or drinking (except such as shall be necessary by any accident for the preservation of

life), feasting or rioting be permitted therein or thereon and in conducting the said worship and adoration no object, animate or inanimate that has been or is, or shall hereafter become, or be recognised as an object of worship by any man or set of men, shall be reviled or slightly or contemptuously spoken of or alluded to either in preaching, praying or in the hymns or other mode of worship that may be delivered, made or used in the said message or building and that no sermon or preaching, discourse, prayer or hymn be delivered made or used in such worship but such as have a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe, to the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and *the strengthening the bonds of union between men of all relations persuasions and creeds.*"

Accepting this as the highest and the final expression of the religious nature of Ram Mohan Roy, we find in it a clear view of both the negative and the positive side of his faith—his aversion to idolatry and sectarianism and his strong attachment to monotheism and catholicity. In language at once plain and unmistakable he herein directs that people of all "sorts and descriptions without distinction" should be allowed to congregate in these premises for the worship of the supreme "Author and Preserver of the Universe," in spirit and in truth, excluding every external ceremonial and symbol, and every deified thing or man, and that divine service should be conducted in such a way that not only should no offence be given to any sect but every means should be resorted to for the promotion of brotherly feelings among "men of all religious persuasions and creeds." Who can contemplate, without emotion, the grandeur of such a universal church—a church not local or denominational, but wide as the universe, and

co-extensive with the human race, in which all distinctions of creed and colour melt into one absolute brotherhood? Who can look without wonder and profound reverence upon moral grandeur of that giant mind which conceived and realised such a church? The philanthropic heart interested in the welfare of all mankind cannot, in its highest aspirations, wish anything more; nor can the ambition of the greatest religious reformers fail to be satisfied in finding in it a realization of their ideal of the church of the future. It is not a church of Jesus or Mahomed; but is emphatically GOD'S CHURCH. It is not a church of Hindus or Christians, it is the church of all mankind. It is not a church of Bengal nor of India; it is the church of the world. In the conception of this universal church the heart, lost in immensity, would exclaim—who can measure the length and breadth, the height and depth of this universal and eternal church! Heaven and earth met in this sublime conception, and time and eternity kiss each other. Built upon the imperishable and immutable principles of absolute religion and upheld by the everlasting arms of that Great God to whose glory it has been upreared, it will continue to bless mankind through endless ages. Blessed child of God! Thy name shall live embalmed in the enduring gratitude of mankind for the whole legacy thou hast conferred on them!

We have reviewed the general features of Ram Mohun Roy's creed as intended for all mankind and as related to the various specific systems of faith extant. We now proceed to consider specially its Hindu aspects and study its bearings on Bengal and Hinduism. We have seen him as the founder of a system of catholic and universal prayer for men of all sorts and persuasions; we have now to canvass his pretensions as the religious reformer of his



country—as the leader of the great Brahmo Somaj movement in India. For it must be remembered that though the scope of his mission comprehended all mankind, his immediate field of action was his own country and his labours were directed chiefly to Hinduism. Though he had for his mission to realize a grand ideal of universal worship by ignoring all partitions between sect and sect, the actual execution of his project was affected by his surroundings, his relations to his idolatrous countrymen, and the prevailing customs and convictions through which he had to fight out his way. Besides, from the peculiar character of Ram Mohun Roy's ideal as set forth above it may be clearly inferred that his object was not to give the world or his countrymen a complete creed of reformed doctrines but simply a general scheme of monotheistic worship. It would not therefore be quite correct to state that he was the founder or even promulgator of that system of religion which is known at the present day as Brahmo Dharma. For its rise and progress we must look to a later date. All that Ram Mohun Roy aimed at for the religious amelioration of his country was the reformation of the prevalent system of idolatrous worship. This he did not seek to achieve by his personal authority. He did not profess himself to be the originator of a new creed, but the reviver of an old one. He appealed to the Shastras in his protests against idolatry; he sought the overthrow of Puranism on the authority of the Vedas which he held up to his countrymen as the real standard of Hinduism. He declared his object to be the restoration of Hinduism to its primitive purity, and in all his anti-Brahminical controversies he drew his arguments invariably from the Vedas. In this his mission was analogous to that of Luther. Dr. Duff, who was intimately acquainted with him and for several years co-operated with him

in the cause of native education, observes on the testimony of the Raja's own statements :—" As Luther's design was to destroy Popery, the corruption of Christianity, by simply resuscitating genuine old Christianity as revealed in the New Testament ; so his (Ram Mohun Roy's) mission was to destroy popular Puranic idolatry, the corruption of Hinduism, by resuscitating genuine old Hinduism as propounded in the ancient Vedas."

From this it is evident that Ram Mohun Roy far from endeavouring to overturn the gigantic system of Hinduism by revolting against the very authority of the Vedas, merely aspired to displace its idolatry by what is regarded as the primitive faith of the founders of Hinduism. He thus professed himself a Hindu—not a Puranic but a Vedic Hindu, and his religious movement was not the organization of an absolutely theistic church but simply the revival of primitive Hinduism. We must not however rush to the extreme of supposing that Ram Mohun Roy was a thorough Vedantist, and that he offered implicit obedience to the authority of the Vedas as the infallible scriptures of God. All that we could gather from his published writings tends to prove that his idea of revelation was catholic, that he measured the inspiration of the so-called scriptures by the truths which they inculcated. Hence he attached great value and importance to the Christian scriptures, and he published a compilation entitled " The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Happiness," for the welfare of his countrymen. We are therefore led to the inference that Ram Mohun Roy availed himself of the authority of the Vedas for emancipating his countrymen from the yoke of Puranic idolatry, not from an absolute belief of those ancient books having come from God himself, but on account of the sublime truths they set forth, with all the weight of acknowledged authority,

on the unity of the Godhead and the spirituality of true worship. Taking his stand on the vantage ground of these truths of Vedic theology he called upon his Hindu countrymen as a Hindu and on the very authority of Hinduism to eschew polytheism and become worshippers of one God. Hence his constant appeals to the Vedas in deciding theological disputes, and refuting the arguments of his adversaries ; hence, too, the eminently Hindu aspect of the service conducted in the church established by him. It is a fact, however singular it may appear to be, that not only was the divine service at the weekly congregation of the Somaj composed mainly of recitations and expositions of Vedic texts, but the readings of the Vedas took place in a private room attached to the hall where only Brahmins were allowed to congregate, men of other castes being strictly excluded from hearing the sacred words and who were only allowed the benefit of the subsequent portion of the ceremony which consisted of the delivery of a sermon by the chief minister and the chanting of hymns. This clearly demonstrates the almost orthodox reverence in which the Vedas were held in the church of Ram Mohun Roy and the Hindu aspect which he gave to his reformed movement.

We have given a general outline of Ram Mohun Roy's ideal of catholic worship as finally developed and embodied in the Trust Deed of his church, and have also noticed the Hindu aspect which this church assumed owing to the exclusive character of its ritual and especially the rigid and systematic exclusion of all but Brahmins from hearing the recitation of Vedic texts. This Hindu aspect forms an important incident in the history of the Brahmo Somaj and deserves our careful considerations. Whether it is justifiable on the ground of nationality or what is usually called reform policy is a question which does not concern.

us in our present inquiry. But there can be no manner of doubt that it is a great anomaly and inconsistency in Ram Mohun Roy's church and that it militates with the essential principles of the Trust Deed. For while on the one hand this memorable legal document distinctly set forth the catholic character of the church, and declared its real object to be to unite "all sorts and descriptions of people" in the worship of the Supreme Creator, and to "strengthen the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds," the actual proceedings of its meetings bore such an exclusive Hindu character as to render it virtually a *sectarian* Hindu church. And hence is it that instead of becoming the universal church of all mankind which we were led to expect from the ideal of the founder, and for which he as a servant of God stood pledged to the world, it assumed the form, and also acquired in some quarters the appropriate name of—the "Hindu Unitarian Church." This is indeed to be deeply regretted. We have already offered the tribute of our warmest gratitude and admiration to the illustrious Rajah who as an eclectic theologian, a bold reformer, a mighty leveller of the distinctions of caste, colour and creed, and a messenger of peace, good-will and brotherhood, summoned all mankind, and his countrymen in particular, to lay down polytheism and the evils of sectarian bigotry and discord, and to unite in the worship of their common Father, the One only without a second, and thus inaugurate a movement of catholic monotheism. We have now to deplore and deprecate that narrow policy which, whether based on notions of expediency or Brahminical predilections, tended to bias this great movement, so as to crib and confine it among a limited section of the Hindu community, in spite of the contrary provisions of the Deed which ostensibly lies at its basis and forms a standing protest

against all manner of sectarianism. It is doubtless of great importance to understand the character and tendencies of these two elements, the one catholic, the other sectarian, which entered into the constitution of the Brahmo Somaj, as they served to determine to a great extent its future history.

The foregoing observations place us in a position to ascertain readily and clearly the relation in which the Brahmo Somaj of the present day stands to Ram Mohun Roy as its acknowledged founder. We have said that he did not found the Brahmo community, nor did he promulgate any system of religion whatever. Monotheistic worship only he founded, and from that has grown up the mighty institution in which we now so heartily rejoice in having found shelter. To Ram Mohun Roy we owe neither Brahmo Dharma nor the Brahmo community, and yet the germ of both. All that he did was to found a church for the congregational worship of the One True God, where all sorts of people, whatever their denomination or creed, could assemble, where Hindus, Mahomedans and Christians were all alike welcome to unite in the adoration of their Supreme and Common Father. The creed was of no consequence, unity in faith was not demanded except only in the idea of the Godhead ; community of worship was all in all, such a baseless and incomplete system cannot last long ; worship must be sustained by knowledge and faith and love, congregational worship must find its life in community of dogmatic faith. This is an inevitable moral necessity. It was therefore left to time, the perfecter of all things, to develop this system of worship into a church of faith, and make the wandering band of worshippers settle together on the ground of common faith and religious brotherhood. It was also left to time to decide whether in such development the Hindu element would so far preponderate eventually.

as to make the provisions of the Trust Deed mere dead letter, or whether the local and the sectarian would merge into the universal and the absolute and thus make the church of Ram Mohun Roy a veritable church—not of India only but—of all mankind.

Having discussed the religious views of the founder of the Brahmo Somaj, we now proceed to describe the circumstances which led to its establishment and recount the important events in the first period of its history.

In the Bengali year 1737 (1816 A. D.) Rajah Ram Mohun Roy established a society in his garden house at Manicktolah under the name of *Atma Shabha*—Intimate Association, for the purpose of spiritual improvement. Its proceedings consisted simply of the recitation of texts from Vedas, and the chanting of Theistic hymns, and were conducted respectively by the Raja's Pundit Shiva Prasad Misra and a paid singer Govinda Mâlâ. The meetings were not quite public, and were attended chiefly by the Raja's personal friends. Among these may be mentioned Dwarka Nath Tagore, Brojo Mohun Mozumdar, Hollodhur Bose, Nundo Kissore Bose and Raj Narain Sen. Some meetings of this society were also held now and then at the house of Rajah Kally Sunkar Ghosal of Bhukailas, and of Brindaban Chunder Mitter of Calcutta. A special discussion meeting was convened on 17th Pous (December 1819) at the house of one Behary Lall Chowbay, where Rajah Radha Kant and a large number of learned Pundits were present, and where Ram Mohun Roy is reported to have accepted the challenge of Shubrahmana Shastri, and carried the palm by an eloquent and masterly vindication of his views. A violent agitation had by this time commenced in Hindu society, and stirred up the champions of idolatry to a sense of their danger, owing to the numerous anti-idolatrous

publications of the Rajah, and the more public and determined attitude of antagonism which he had now assumed against popular polytheism. The enmity towards the Rajah increased to such an extent that the *Atma Shabha* itself languished away, and many of his friends deserted him and apostatized one after the other, leaving him to fight his battle almost single handed. The only means now left for the propagation of his views was the publication of books and tracts, and this he carried on with greater vigour and earnestness exposing manfully the absurdities of Puranic idolatry and supporting Monotheism by endless quotations from the ancient Hindu scriptures.

In 1749 (1828 A.D.) Rev. W. Adam, a Protestant Missionary, who had been converted to Unitarian Christianity through the influence of Ram Mohun Roy, used to hold meetings and deliver lectures, on religious subjects once every week in a room attached to the *Bengal Harkaru* Newspaper office. The native portion of the auditory consisted of the Rajah, two of his relations, and Tara Chand Chuckerbutty and Chunder Shekur Dey. One day while they were returning home as usual, the two latter happened to remark that it was a matter of great regret and humiliation that they were compelled to attend meetings of foreigners for the benefit of their souls while they had nothing similar of their own, and suggested the desirableness of a purely native public meeting for the study of the Vedas and other devotional purposes. The suggestion was promptly and heartily agreed to by the Rajah and he felt peculiar interest and gratification in being thus called upon to carry out his cherished idea on an extended scale for the benefit of his countrymen at large. The matter was subsequently referred to some of his friends, and Dwarka Nath Tagore, Prosunno Coomer Tagore, Kalli Nath Roy and Mathura Nath Mullic

came forward with liberal offers of support. Active measures were taken to purchase a piece of ground for the proposed church building, but owing to inadequacy of funds, a house at the Chitpore Road was temporarily engaged, and in Bhadro 1750 ( 1828 A.D. ) public prayer meetings began to be held there every Saturday evening. The Service consisted of four parts—recitation of Vedic texts by two Telegu Brahmins, readings from the Upanishads, by Utsabandanda Vidyabagish, a discourse by Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, and, lastly, hymns. The funds having soon swelled to a desirable extent Ram Mohun Roy and his co-adjutors were enabled to purchase the present building and the Church was formally inaugurated there on the 11th Magh 1751 (January 1830 A.D. ), in the very same year in which through the patriotic exertions and influence of the Raja the obnoxious practice of Suttee was prohibited by the Legislature. Babus Romanath Tagore, Boycontonath Roy Chowdry and Radha Prosad Roy were duly appointed Trustees of these premises to use them for the purposes and according to the provisions and directions set forth in the Trust Deed. The sum of Rs. 6,080 was kept in the custody of the late well-known firm Messrs. Mackintosh and Company, as a permanent fund from the interest of which the ordinary expenses of the church were to be met. The service continued essentially the same as before, the time of meeting was only changed from Saturday to Wednesday.

Only a year after the establishment of his church, Ram Mohun Roy left Calcutta for England where he lived for 18 months and died in Aswin 1755 (1833) in the sixtieth year of his age.

After the departure of Ram Mohun Roy to England and his subsequent death the spiritual affairs of his church were managed by Acharjya Ram Chandra



Vidyabagish, and its pecuniary wants were met by the liberal contributions of Babu Dwarka Nath Tagore. Though an old Brahmin innocent of English education, the Acharjya did ample justice to his ministerial duties, and his able and excellent sermons, though written in crude Bengali, as it then prevailed, bear testimony to his good heart, his strong devotional feelings and his faith in the reformed creed of the Rajah. The congregation however gradually decreased in number, and the movement soon ceased to attract fresh interest or draw any new members from the educated classes. All its novelty and splendour had died with its illustrious founders, and though it was upheld for a few years by Vidyabagish, it gradually declined. Such untimely collapse of an institution pregnant with the seeds of India's regeneration cannot be sufficiently deplored, and speaks trumpet-tongued against the selfish indifference of those who, though they came forward to co-work with Ram Mohun Roy with apparent zeal and cordiality, soon betrayed their weakness and seized the earliest opportunity to leave his church to take care of itself. God's will, however, must be done and often is done in unexpected and mysterious ways. Already the elements of its revival were at work elsewhere; a little band of energetic youths was gathering under the direction of Providence and the leadership of a singularly gifted individual, destined to bring the whole force of their well organized combination to bear upon the resuscitation of the Somaj. The band was the Tattwabodhini Shabha and that individual Babu Debendra Nath Tagore. That this society lived to do immense good to the Brahmo Somaj and to Bengal, and entitled itself to the enduring gratitude of the nation few will venture to deny. Before we proceed to describe its rise and progress and note the important incidents of its

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career it is necessary, according to the plan we have laid down, to examine and understand aright the peculiar religious ideas of its worthy founder which fashioned and moulded this institution, and subsequently exerted considerable influence on the Brahmo Somaj for a great length of time. As he is living amongst us, his religious character may be said to be too much within the scope of public observation to need any special advocacy on our part to enlighten the public. Nor do we propose to discuss his general character here. Our present inquiry embraces only that sublime ideal of his religious nature which it was his mission and privilege under God to stamp on the Brahmo Somaj, of which he was called to take the leadership subsequent to the demise of the Rajah. It is this great secret which not only throws light on his entire life and character but enables us to appreciate his true mission in reference to his age and country. And it is the ignorance of this secret, we apprehend, which has led many to do great injustice to him and to ignore altogether his claims to greatness. For it is true of all men, and especially so of extraordinary and gifted minds, that it is impossible to arrive at a just estimate of their character from mere outward facts of life unless we dive beneath and apprehend the ruling principles which underlie them. They mistake and wrong him who failing to discover in him some of the characteristics which they expected, and which great reformers have prominently exhibited, refuse to accord to him the tribute of gratitude and admiration. They do him grave injustice who for some deficiencies and faults in his character refuse to recognise that latent and inherent greatness of his soul to which the whole country is immensely indebted. Of anything like the original genius of a revolutionary reformer he does not boast, to that lofty title he makes no pretensions. Yet he has

excellences which the world has yet to appreciate and admire, excellences for which India at least will ever cherish his name with profound gratitude. Imperfection he has—and what man has not?—but that he is commissioned by God to fulfil an important mission in the history of his country does not in our opinion admit of the slightest doubt; and for this he has laboured with singleness of purpose and indomitable firmness truly characteristic of great minds. That mission is, so far as we can understand it, *the worship of God as a living reality, in spirit and love*. For this he lives and labours, and for this his life and labours are precious and interesting to us. In this he displays his greatness as a steward of God, bearing a responsible commission which is identical with his very life. All the rest of his character, its good features and its blemishes, may be his, *this* is emphatically ours, India's and humanity's. In our estimate of him we forget the former in the latter, as we forget the private in the historical man, the personal in the universal, the transient in the everlasting.

The very nature of this idea makes it shun noise and ostentatious display. It manifests itself noiselessly in private life and in quiet ministrations, not in uproarious struggles nor revolutionary movements. It shines not in the burning rays of the midday sun before the busy world; its beauty and sublimity resemble the lunar orb, and charm them who, away from the bustle of the world and the influences of the senses, calmly enjoy its light in solitary retirement. In vain would we expect to find Babu Debendra Nath occupying the front ranks of the battle field of reform, doing desperate battle with absurd usages and institutions, reducing the old castles of error into ruins with single-handed valour and purchasing triumph with hard sacrifices. This is quite foreign to his ideas and his quiet mission. Not war but peace is

his watchword ; not action but contemplation. He summons us not to the stirring activities of social battles, but takes us into the closet and beside the altar, and there casts us back upon ourselves that we may look into our inner nature and by spiritual exercises learn contemplation and communion with God. He shuts our eyes to the outward world and opens them inwards to the stern realities within. His mission refers not to external matter but to the unseen Spirit—spiritual reality, spiritual joy and spiritual love. His ministry is a uniform advocacy of the cause of the Spirit and his life is a grand illustration of its truths. Ever since religion first dawned on his soul, his chief resolve, his sole ambition, has been to behold God in all His living reality in the recesses of his heart, and so to love him and enjoy His transcendent beauty and tenderness as to live and move in Him all his life, here and hereafter. His deep and diligent studies of Vedantic writings, so full of pantheistic spiritualism, helped his early spiritual development and by constant prayer and meditation he trained himself to concentrate and fix his heart in God. He did not pursue an abstract theological divinity nor did he soar into the regions of mystical reveries and fantastic fits of ecstasy. His spiritual growth was *religious*. Prayer was his guide, humble and earnest prayer led him to a Personal God and prevented the wreck of his soul on the shoals of Pantheism, Mysticism and "Spiritualism." He not only recognised God as a grand Reality, but he felt Him in his heart as a God of infinite loving-kindness, he perceived the beauty of His love, and he learnt to love Him and worship Him as his father and mother, his friend and protector. Thus God was to him both life and love, his refuge and comfort in the temptations and sufferings of the world. Thus he realized in his life, for his own benefit and the benefit of his countrymen,

the spiritual worship of God in faith and love. His life is a standing rebuke to those who represent theism as a dry abstract creed incapable of influencing the heart, much less of administering comfort and peace to it. Here is a living confutation of their lame assumption, here is a life which shews vividly the influence of theistic faith, its vitality and its joys. What if true religion is entirely a thing of the spirit and is devoid of the external support of book revelation and miracles, of visible deities and tangible ceremonies? Is not faith the "evidence of things not seen and the substance of things hoped for?" Is it not able to stand on its own basis, firm and immovable? That faith, simple, serene and sweet, yet vigorous and living, has fixed its roots deep in the heart of Babu Debendra Nath and has afforded him sustenance and comfort in life's trials and vicissitudes for nearly a third of a century, and with its aid too has he overcome the temptations of the flesh and achieved the victory of truth in his life. His form is as venerable and majestic as his soul is exalted and sublime; his conversations and manners, his domestic pursuits and social movements, and in fact the speculations and practices which make up his daily life uniformly exhibit the singular spirituality of his faith. He preaches and practices it with consistency. His thoughts, words and actions are full of it. He lives verily, in the spirit-world and he loves it too, he engages himself in worldly avocations like ordinary men, but within he seeks solace and delight, strength and peace. The more we enter the secrets of his life, the more we find how profoundly emotional his spirituality is, how thoroughly he feels the influence of its joys and hopes. Contemplation may be said to be his native element; without it he would pine away even though surrounded by all the felicities and luxuries of the world. Irritated by provocation,

troubled by doubt, embittered by calamity or depressed by disappointment he returns to his element in quest of that peace which the world cannot give. Hence he is generally in a contemplative mood, and specially so when he feels, harassed and mortified in his dealings with the world. For hours together he is generally found to be alone, deeply absorbed in devout thought ; sometimes he would spend a whole forenoon or afternoon in solitude. He prefers loneliness to busy companionship, and the pleasures of retirement to those of society. When to this we add the circumstance that he frequently leaves the bustle of the town and repairs to rural retreats with a view to enjoy uninterrupted solitude and afford complete relaxation to the weary soul, we find in him something so unique and so exalted that we feel not the least hesitation in pronouncing the almost unparalleled spiritual greatness and nobility of his mind. But there has been a yet higher manifestation of his extraordinary spiritual culture. In the year 1857, a little before the great Indian Rebellion, he was so far annoyed by the troubles of his life that he undertook a long and tedious journey to the Simla Hills, and there in a lonely sequestered place spent more than *two years* in close retirement, studying self, Nature and God with undivided and concentrated earnestness. Is not this too much for ordinary humanity to conceive, much less achieve ? And remember that Babu Debendra Nath is the son of the "Indian Cæsus" brought up amid fabulous opulence and princely luxuries, the father of many children, and the owner of a magnificent estate ; and then fancy such a millionaire for two years in solitary life in the Himalayan retreats, away from family and all the attractions of his opulence, given to prayer and meditation, faith and God. This is indeed enough to show the marvellous extent of his spiritual develop-

ment and to stamp him as a great man destined to act as a noble example of the peace and joy of spiritual religion. To the hands of such a man did Providence entrust the management of the Brahmo Somaj and what character it was to assume one might with little difficulty see foreshadowed in the peculiar ideal of his mind. It was since his connection that the Somaj became a mighty and grand engine for turning men's minds from the material realities of Hindu worship to the stirring realities of pure monotheistic worship and teaching them to worship God in spirit and in love. The Vedantic scriptures which had been employed by Ram Mohun Roy for silencing orthodox Pundits and regularly recited in his church as authoritative texts of theologic weight, Babu Debendra Nath wielded to accomplish a higher purpose—to lead the minds of the congregation to sublime conceptions of God, to burning faith and deep devotion. He introduced regular prayers and animating sermons calculated to establish direct and personal communion between each votary and his God. The raptures of such communion, the grandeur of the spirit-world, the peace of resignation, the beauty of God as the Father and Mother of mankind, the glory of God as the Saviour of sinners, the hopes of a blessed eternity and everlasting companionship of God in Heaven where there is no weeping and no bitterness, where joy alone reigneth for ever, have been pictured with thrilling eloquence in the celebrated *Bakhyans* which he has delivered in the Somaj. These sermons, we may say without fear of contradiction, are of masterly kind and outvie any which have been published on similar subjects here or in Europe. In depth of thought, grandeur of sentiment and beauty of style they are excellent, and will continue to speak to endless generations of our community of the noble soul whose emanations

they are in a more impressive manner than we can possibly hope to do. May his contemporaries learn to respect the life of this tried servant of God, and may the blessings of God and his country's gratitude amply reward his long labours in the cause of truth !

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## FAREWELL LECTURE ON "ENGLAND AND INDIA." \*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—More than a century has elapsed since the battle of Plassey laid the foundation of the British Empire in India. It is interesting to trace the rise and growth of that great empire. It is interesting to see how a small company of English merchants, who originally came out here with the sole object of extending British commerce to the East, eventually succeeded in making the British power paramount in this country,—how a few insignificant factories gradually expanded into vast territorial acquisition,—how province after province was conquered, and dynasty after dynasty succumbed to the rising power, till the magnificent fabric of the British Government was duly consolidated and established on firm foundation. The conquest achieved is indeed wonderful,—such as eclipses even the glory of Rome. I allude not to diplomacy in the cabinet, or strategy in the field ; I do not point to the external pomp and splendour of administration or to brilliant triumphs achieved by the sword. It is the conquest of mind effected in India which invests British rule with

\* Delivered by Babu K. C. Sen at the Town Hall on the 2nd February, 1870.



undying glory. History furnishes no parallel to the stupendous and lasting monuments of intellectual and moral conquest which England has raised here, and it is these which must ever excite our deepest admiration and gratitude. A great nation has been revived and roused from death-like sleep. What was india in ancient times? Her early literature and theology, metaphysics and astronomy, which have extorted the admiration of all succeeding ages, and are held in high estimation by the best antiquarians of the present day, proclaim the pre-eminent greatness of the early Hindus, and prove that they were a noble race. Let the student of history say whether when he reads the works of the Indian Aryan, he does not feel that he sits before a venerable form, and whether that form does not excite in him sentiments approaching to reverence. The venerable Rishi of ancient India sitting under the shade of his favourite tree, indulged in profound contemplations of the Deity, and enjoyed sweet communion with the Supreme One; and he led a life of unimpeachable purity. Even Hindu ladies applied themselves to theological and literary pursuits, and took part in public ceremonies and undertakings, and they have left monuments of their intelligence and devotion which put to shame many of the boasted productions of their more refined sisters of the present day. Such was the condition of the early Hindus. But gradually idolatry in hundred hideous forms, priestcraft, superstition and caste came in, degraded, debased and demoralized that noble race and reduced it to a pitiable condition. Mahometan oppression and misrule at last completed the scene of intellectual and moral desolation already so horrid. Deep gloom then overspread the length and breadth of the country, and there was not a star in the firmament to shed a redeeming ray of hope. At this crisis God's merciful Providence interposed,

and administered the needful help. Fallen India cried for help, and lo ! at Heaven's bidding England hastened to her rescue. If here you do not recognise the finger of Providence ; if here you do not vividly perceive the direct operation of God's special mercy for the salvation of nations, I do not know where you will. It is true that apparently the affair has no religious significance. The earliest English adventurers in India were actuated by purely worldly motives ; they came out for lucre's sake. The measures too which some of the earlier Governors adopted to strengthen and extend British rule were of a questionable character ; and would not bear criticism. Nevertheless the contact of England with India was providential, and not a mere accident. If we look beneath the surface we cannot fail to see the wise and beneficent arrangements of Divine economy. I do most devoutly believe that it was for the definite purpose of helping this country that the English were commissioned and deputed to come and rule here ; that divine purpose has been consistently carried out in spite of human errors and immoralities which were apparent in the matter. As soon as the spirit of the English mind came in contact with the Indian mind, a grand revolution commenced. Native society was shaken to its centre ; all departments of Indian life were convulsed as if by some mysterious agency ; and a series of most important reforms, political, intellectual, social and religious, came in rapid succession.

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## NATIVE FEMALE IMPROVEMENT.\*

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—In order to estimate aright the social and domestic economy of the Hindus it is necessary to take into account not only their present condition, but also their earlier history. For, the Hindus are not a nation of yesterday ; they boast a most ancient and glorious civilization. What we see around us today, is a fallen nation, a nation whose primitive greatness lies buried in ruins. Its national literature and science its theology and philosophy, its industry and commerce, its social prosperity and domestic simplicity and sweetness, are almost numbered with things that were. As we survey the mournful and dismal scene of desolation, spiritual, social and intellectual, which spreads around us, we in vain try to recognize therein the land of Kalidas, the land of poetry, of science and civilization. In order, therefore, that we may understand the real character of the Hindus, in order that we may practically, ameliorate their condition, it is necessary to have a correct knowledge of the social institutions and customs which existed in ancient times in this country. A right knowledge of the early history of India will supply a permanent and strong basis, upon which to uprear national civilization. Now, that the surges of a most aggressive civilization from the West, are beating against Native society, it is expedient that all social reformers should endeavour to steer clear of the " Scylla and Charybdis " of opposite extremes. Indeed, there are some who

\* An address by Babu Keshub Chunder Sen at a meeting of the Social Science Association held on Friday, the 24th February, 1871.

believe that the best way to reform India is to supplant and destroy all that is native, and to introduce Western civilization in its entirety and fullness. There are on the other hand those who try to drive back the tide of Western civilization, and always protest against every thing European and foreign. In my humble opinion, the elements of oriental and occidental civilization should as far as possible be blended together, and neither should be rejected. In spite of her shortcomings and wants, India seems to me to occupy at the present moment a most advantageous position in regard to her future advancement and reformation. Behold her sitting at the confluence of two mighty rivers, and gathering the priceless riches of truth which are flowing down the streams—the products of Eastern civilization and Western thought, of ancient wisdom and modern enterprise. All that is great and good in ancient Asia and modern Europe, seems to be coming through these different channels for the benefit of our great country. It is necessary that we, natives of the soil, should take advantage of this circumstance. Whether we undertake the religious or social or intellectual advancement of the country, we should consistently avail ourselves of both these sources of improvement. It is our duty and our interest to preserve all the valuable truths, all the wholesome social customs and institutions which belong to our country, and at the same time, gratefully accept all that is offered to us by Western nations. The battle which was strenuously fought here some years ago between the Anglicists and the Orientalists in the sphere of Education, and which at last ended in a compromise, has, I believe, to be fought in every department of native improvement, and must be similarly decided. You are no doubt aware how that great controversy has been finally settled by the educational authorities.

The Government and the Universities are now trying to afford facilities to the study of Sanskrit, while at the same time the greatest encouragement is given to the cultivation of English literature and science. If we are at all sincerely anxious to promote the true advancement of our country, we should adopt the same principle in every department of reform, and combine the elements of Eastern and Western thought, the civilization of ancient and modern times. Nowhere indeed in the world, do we see such a singular juxtaposition of these different elements, as we behold to-day in India. In their union lies the secret of our future greatness. In this country, reformation in order to be true and abiding, must not only mean a new civilization but also a revival. It must not be a mere introduction of Western customs, but a resuscitation into new life of the lingering vitality still to be found in the social organization of the Hindu community. Whatever is true of other departments of improvements and reformation, applies with peculiar force to the subject which is under consideration this evening. It would be really ungenerous and unfair to say, that India has always been opposed to female improvement, simply because a few inhabitants on the banks of the Ganges, protest against it to-day. Transport yourself back in imagination, hundreds of years ago, and you will find in the earlier writings and practices of this great nation, emphatic protests against those injurious customs, which we are endeavouring to suppress; and positive injunctions and precepts in support of the reforms which are most needful. In the Vedantic period, in the Brihadaranyak Upanishad we come in contact with sacred and impressive dialogues, on immortality between Maitreyi and her husband Yagnavalkya, in which these passages occur—Maitreyi said,—“ Lord ! If this whole world full of wealth

belonged to me, should I become immortal thereby?" "No," replied Yagnavalkya, "as is the life of fortunate people so shall thy life be. There is no hope of immortality by wealth." Maitreyi said,— "What should I do with that which cannot make me immortal?" In a later period, we find in the code of Manu, high ethical precepts enjoining the necessity of female education, and of respect for the fair sex. "Where women are honored, there deities are pleased; but where they are dishonored, all religious acts become fruitless." "In whatever family, the husband is contented with his wife, and the wife with her husband, in that house will fortune be assuredly permanent." "By confinement at home, even under affectionate and observant guardians, they are not secure, but those women are truly secure who are guided by their own good inclinations." We have some excellent passages in Mahanirvan Tantra— "Rear up a girl also in the same way, and give her education with great care." "So long as a girl does not know how to honour and serve a husband, and is ignorant of moral discipline, her father should not give her away in marriage." Such passages as these clearly and authoritatively sanction the education of girls and their marriages at a proper age, and denounce the false logic which supports the custom of seclusion, that has prevailed in Bengal and other parts of this country for some time past. But it is not merely precepts, but also examples which we see in the early history of the Hindus. It is impossible to deny that women of exemplary character lived in this country, who adorned and purified Hindu homes and exercised an ennobling influence, far and wide. Their names are still cherished with respect and gratitude, and, I may say, in some cases, with reverence in many a Hindu family at the present day. In the early period of the Upanishads, Maitreyi,

whom I have already mentioned, and Gargi took prominent parts in religious and philosophical enquiries and discussions, and were devoted students of theology. In the two Hindu epics are represented such illustrious characters as Sita and Savitri, Draupadi and Damayanti who shed lustre on Hindu mythology, and whose purity and devotion to their husbands, Hindu ladies of the present day always reverentially emulate. The scientific acquirements of Khana and Lilabati have rendered their names famous in Indian history and have always challenged admiration. The former was deeply acquainted with astronomy and her "Sayings" are familiar words in every Hindu household. Lilabati had a profound knowledge of mathematics. The work called after her name was written by her father Bhaskar Acharya for her benefit. At the present day, many students of mathematics in this country find in that work much to edify them. In later times we find in Southern India the name of Avyar, a celebrated moral philosopher, who was also versed in geology and medicine, and whose moral treatises are still studied in Tamil schools in the Madras Presidency;—Mira Bai, an extremely devout Hindu woman, whose religious books are read with great avidity and interest by the adherents of the Vaishnava sect; Hati Vidyalankar, who founded a school at Benares, and gave unmistakable proofs of her knowledge of Logic and Metaphysics;—and last of all Ahalya Bai, whose administrative ability and philanthropy are well known. Many other such names might be brought forward. Those already adduced are, however sufficient, to bear irrefragable testimony to the progress of female education in ancient times. But alas! many of the good customs of the earlier Hindus have fallen into desuetude in the course of time. The people have greatly degenerated and deteriorated, and there are

signs of intellectual and social degradation on all sides. The present condition of the country it is, indeed, sad to contemplate. Darkness covers the land. The intellect of the nation has been paralysed and its higher aspirations and impulses have decayed ! We no longer see those pure, sweet, and happy Indian homes, where our ancestors enjoyed the pleasures of social and domestic life, and the higher pleasures of spiritual communion. The condition of Hindu women is miserable. A revival took place exactly half a century ago when some Christian Missionaries fired with zeal in the cause of truth and female improvement, stood forward even at the risk of incurring odium and obloquy, and tried to diffuse the blessings of enlightenment among the native female population in Calcutta. Miss Cooke, afterwards Mrs. Wilson, arrived in Calcutta in 1821, and in the course of a year established eight schools, containing 214 girls. She was indefatigable in her exertions, and thoroughly attached to the cause which she took up. These schools were subsequently amalgamated and incorporated into the "Central School." This school was established in the year 1826, and it is worthy of remark that one of our opulent native gentlemen, Raja Buddinath, came forward and gave a donation of Rs. 20,000, in order to help those who were engaged in the cause of female education in establishing a suitable building for the School. Miss Cooke laboured under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society for a long time, and it must be confessed, and gratefully too, that her labours were crowned with a large measure of success. But I must be permitted to remark at the same time that the pupils belonging to her District Schools, were mostly recruited from the lower classes—the indigent classes of native women in and around Calcutta. It was, therefore, reserved for the Hon'ble Mr. Bethune, in the year 1849 to



erect a building and found an institution for the special benefit of the richer and the middle classes of native women. The School was opened with great *eclat* in this city. Many native gentlemen came forward and assured the founder of their interest in the undertaking and promised him support. But still somehow or other, the school did not thrive. Several years elapsed before it gained anything like a sound and firm footing. Gradually the first excitement of popular antagonism subsided, and the native mind began to appreciate more and more the benefits of female enlightenment, and realised its importance and necessity. And thus in course of time the cause of female education gradually and slowly, yet steadily prospered. During the last decade, we have the most convincing facts and figures to prove that the success which has crowned the efforts of the state and of philanthropic Native and European gentlemen engaged in the cause has far exceeded our most sanguine expectations. In the year 1860-61, there were only 16 Girls' Schools with only 395 pupils ; but in the year 1869-70, the last official year, we find no less than 284 aided schools for girls having 6569 pupils. According to Mr. Howele's Note on Education, it appears that there are throughout British India no less than 2,000 Girls' Schools, and upwards of 50,000 girls receiving education in such schools.

All these facts indicate that sort of progress which is to be seen on the surface. That there are so many schools and so many girls receiving the benefits of liberal education, is indeed a matter for congratulation. But this is not all we have to say in order to prove the actual amount of progress that has been achieved. The under-currents of native feeling and thought in the direction of progress and enlightenment, are indeed far more cheering and encouraging even, than the external progress which we see on the surface,

and which may be gathered from official reports Go into an Indian Zenana and you will there find Hindu ladies who never come into contact with English governesses, reading Bengali books and deriving much benefit with the aid of their husbands or brothers and not only growing in intellectual knowledge but also in faith and purity, and in general enlightenment. Is it not gratifying to see native ladies though immured in the Zenana and beset with all the disadvantages of secluded life, casting away idolatry and all things unclean, along with ignorance and incorrect notions of men and things, and becoming wiser and better? Such scenes we behold, not in one or two exceptional families but in many enlightened Hindu homes in Calcutta, and the large towns and stations in the Mofussil. In fact the light of knowledge has penetrated the strongholds of the Zenana, and is enlightening those who would never come out to receive it. In the Central Bengal Division under Mr. Woodrow, we find 1327 native ladies receiving regular instructions in the Zenana from what are called Zenana teachers. All honour to such teachers! They are acting on a very important and liberal principle—namely, if native ladies will not come to our schools, our schools must go to them: if they will not seek enlightenment in public schools, we must give them all those means and opportunities and place those advantages and facilities at their disposal, which will enable them to receive the blessings of enlightenment in their own houses. Many a Zenana teacher goes about visiting native families, and the results of the labours of such teachers are cheering and vastly encouraging. Several books that are on the table here and also the brilliant specimens of needle-work you see before you, show what an amount of progress has been made within the walls of the Zenana of late years. Many of the Hindu ladies who

have made these things with their own hands, never received any training in a public school—nay some of them never came under the influence of English governesses. For these reasons the books and works of art collected here are peculiarly creditable to those who made them. There is also an interesting monthly periodical called the *Bamabodhini Patrika* which is published in Calcutta for the special and exclusive benefit of Hindu ladies, and is largely read by them both in Calcutta and in remote provincial stations. Hundreds of ladies are regular subscribers and readers of this journal and if you open its pages you will find many valuable contributions from the pen of native ladies—charming verses, essays and dissertations upon moral, historical and also scientific subjects. You will find too on the table, books published by native ladies, some of them are very highly creditable to the authors;—1. "Hindu Females," 2, "Hindu Female Education," 3. "Vishya Shobha" by Koilash Basini Devi; 4. *Urvashi Natac*" by a daughter of a Brahmin; 5. "Padya Kishore" by Bhuban Mohinee Dasi; 6. *Kabita Mala* by a Lady of a respectable Family; 7. *Nari Charit* by Martha Saudamini Sing; 8. *Monottama* by a Hindu lady; 9. *Vidya Daridra Dalani*; 10. *Nilnolini Natac*; 11. *Chitta Bilashini* by Kristo Kamini Dasi.

These facts indisputably prove that female education has been making steady progress, not only outside the Zenana in public schools but also in the Zenana. These are indeed hopeful signs and cannot fail to make us sanguine as regards the future of our great country. I do not at all agree with the remarks made by the Director of Public Instruction in winding up his report on Native female education. "Altogether," says he, "there is more that is disheartening than cheering in this branch of educational work." Every one who has had an insight into Zenana life,

must admit that this is far from correct. There are facts which conclusively prove that the mind of the Hindu women has been roused and awakened to a sense of its degraded condition and that in many Hindu families earnest minded, gentle, accomplished and devout ladies are earnestly trying to throw off those fetters of spiritual and social restrictions, imposed by a crafty priesthood, which kept them down for many generations. Many a Hindu girl is beginning to feel that she ought to take advantage of that light of civilization and education which is being freely enjoyed by native boys in public schools. Even the unfortunate Hindu widow feels that she has been grievously wronged, and that she must have access to such means as will enable her to grow in enlightenment and wisdom, and attain social happiness. Amongst adult native ladies, girls and widows, there is wholesome excitement, which is beyond the shadow of a doubt.

It must however be confessed that there are yet serious obstacles in the way of female improvement, which we must successively grapple with, and if possible overcome without any further delay. The work of female enlightenment and progress that we see around us is not real, not so enduring as it ought to be. The Hindu female mind is advancing indeed, but it advances only to a particular point, beyond which it cannot proceed. All our attempts and movements in this direction seem to have reached the boundary line, beyond which we cannot, under existing circumstances, take a single step, even if we would. This line must, sooner or later, be obliterated, before the work of native female education can be said to have made real progress. No permanent or abiding benefit can be expected, unless we lay the axe at the root of the tree of corruption and ignorance ; and place the native woman in the wholesome

atmosphere of moral and intellectual liberty and enlightenment (cheers). I have therefore thought it proper to come forward with a few suggestions of a practical character, which if carried out, will, I believe, give the Hindu women that amount of real enlightenment and culture, which they urgently require and which enable them to advance unfettered in the path of progress.

The first means to which I have to draw your attention is the establishment of Normal Schools. I am glad to inform you that two such schools have recently been established in the metropolis, one in connection with the Bethune Female School and the other in connection with the Indian Reform Association. The latter institution at present contains thirteen adult ladies, who receive regular instructions in Bengali and English and Needlework; and I believe if they continue for a year, or a year and a half only, they will be enabled to go out as tutoresses and either take charge of girl's schools or give instructions to Zenana ladies. There are two other such schools, one at Dacca and the other at Rampore, which, I am told, are not properly managed, but I hope they will improve in future. The importance of such schools is apparent and undeniable. We all feel the necessity of well trained native female teachers, who would give instructions to Zenana ladies, and also serve in the capacity of superintending mistresses in public schools, governmental and private. The dull and dry teachings of male tutors are not suited to the female mind, and are not at all calculated to impart that special training which it needs. It is female teachers alone, who can properly develop, exalt, and purify the female mind and reform female life. The necessity of such teachers, therefore, is manifest to everyone who has thought over the subject at all, and has had some practical experience in the

matter. I cannot leave this part of the subject without mentioning with cordial thanks, the name of Miss Carpenter, who while here, gave a great impetus to the cause of female education, and opened the eyes, both of the educational authorities of this country and the Government, to the importance of Female Normal Schools. It was on her recommendation that the Government sanctioned an annual outlay of public money for the purpose of establishing and sustaining Native Female Normal Schools in the Presidency towns in India.

Secondly, an Inspectress is very much needed, who might go and visit Hindu families, and see how the zenana teachers are doing their work. She should also inspect Government public schools for girls, and send periodical Reports to Government as to how these schools are being managed. Such an Inspectress would do an immense amount of good, which can not possibly be otherwise in the present circumstances of the country. At present the Government can not possibly take any notice whatever of what is being done in the zenana, and no improvement is possible, simply because there is none to go there and report matters to government and the public. If we have well trained and efficient inspectors who look after the Government and aided schools, we must likewise have well trained and competent inspectresses who would keep girls' schools, and specially the Zenana agency in a state of efficiency.

In the third place we require Adult Classes. So long as the pernicious customs of premature marriage exists in their country, Hindoo girls must leave public schools, before they have received anything like sound education. They begin their education at the age of seven, and give up their studies probably at the age of nine or ten ; and then when they have gone back to their own homes they find themselves surrounded

by an atmosphere of ignorance, folly, and superstition, which paralyses their energies, arrests the growth of their intellects and prevents their prosecuting their studies further. Thus, native girls renounce their studies at a very early age, when in fact, in civilized countries, they are found to begin them. The only way to meet the difficulty of the case is to open adult female classes in central and convenient localities in large towns. We must take circumstances as they are. It will not do to say native girls must continue for five or six years more in public schools, if they wish to receive the benefits of enlightenment. We can not be inexorable dictators in a matter like this. In the present state of Hindoo Society, native girls must submit to the injunctions and directions of their parents and guardians, and in conformity with the customs of the country, get married at a premature age, and shortly after sever their connection with public schools. If this is inevitable, and it must be so for some time to come, some means should be devised to meet the difficulties of the case. If the girls must enter the Zenana, and make up their minds not to come out again, we must send teachers to them and give them the means of continuing their studies. Let the girls of five or six neighbouring families be collected together day after day in the house of a respectable native, and let a competent female teacher be appointed to give them systematic instructions. Thus we may have twenty or thirty small adult classes in different parts of Calcutta, where ladies of advanced age will be enabled to freely prosecute their studies, after leaving school, for any length of time they like.

Fourthly, we want secular teachers for the Zenana. I have already given Zenana teachers the credit which is due to them. I have given them the sincere and fervent thanks of my heart for what they have

so nobly done and are doing. But at the same time, we must not be blind to the fact, that they are giving education with a view to make their pupils converts to Christianity. (Cheers). Certainly they are bound to do so, according to the light which is in them, and we should be ungrateful—indeed, if we went to the extent of interfering with their freedom of action or throwing obstacles in their way. Let them have their course by all means ; but at the same time we must call upon the Government to show their regard for that principle of religious neutrality which they are bound to carry out in all circumstances, not only for the education of males, but also for the education of women. It seems strange that in the present state of female education in India, there are no means or appliances whatever, for giving secular instructions to the Zenana ladies under the auspices of the Government. The Government ought to employ competent and efficient European female teachers who would go about visiting Hindu families and give secular instructions in literature and the sciences, just as has been done for many years systematically and on principle, in Government Schools and Colleges for boys. If our boys receive secular education, why should not our girls receive it too (cheers)? Is it not unfair that the Government should deny the Zenana ladies secular enlightenment while it is freely accorded to boys? I do not mean to say that the Government should spread godless education far and wide, but I do believe that moral and secular instructions if imparted in a truthful and devout spirit will tend, not only to purify the minds of native boys and girls but also reform the Indian household and adorn it with all those charms and embellishments of a moral and spiritual character which we at present most need. I do believe the result of Government education has been the awakening of the native



intellect to such an extent, as to draw it away from idolatry and superstition, and lead it into the path of liberal reform ; and may we not expect the same favourable results in the sphere of female education ? I think the educational authorities in India ought to take this matter into consideration. In fact I cannot account for this anomaly except on the supposition that the matter was never fairly represented to the Government. Now that the matter has been brought to public notice, I hope and trust, that this great evil will be remedied, and this great want will be supplied without any further delay. It is to be hoped that a body of competent female teachers, English and native will be trained up, who would give liberal education, in the strictest sense of the term, unsectarian, liberal, secular education, to Indian girls.

Fifthly, I propose visits to interesting places. What is being done at the present moment in England for the benefit of the working classes ought to be done in India for the benefit of Indian women. Those who attend the workingmen's institutes in England are now and then placed under the charge of competent and experienced scientific men, under whose guidance they go and visit public museums, libraries and other instructive public places, and with whose aid they are enabled to learn many important scientific and historical facts. A similar experiment may be tried with great advantage in our country. Competent and experienced English ladies may occasionally invite together five and twenty native ladies and proceed with them to such places as the Asiatic Museum and the Botanical Gardens, and explain to them the varied and interesting objects that are to be found there, for the benefit of their minds and hearts. With illustrations, such practical lessons will do them immense good which no mere amount of book knowledge will ever be able to achieve. At

present, immured in the Zenana, they can have very little idea of what transpires outside the house ; but if thus now and then they are introduced into such places as I have mentioned they will be able to see with their own eyes the wisdom in the departments of art and science repositories which have been collected from generation to generation ; and in the amplitudes of nature, they will survey flowers and vegetables rocks and rivers and whatever is beautiful and sublime in creation which will expand their minds, destroy their prejudices and make knowledge interesting to them. Sixthly and lastly, I should suggest periodical examinations and distribution of prizes to accomplished and intelligent native girls, at stated times under the auspices of the Social Science Association (Applause). This will no doubt afford great encouragement to Hindu ladies. They will be greatly encouraged if they learn that we are ready to assist them with books and scientific instruments and apparatus as a reward for merit. There are many girls and ladies of advanced age in Calcutta, who under the auspices of the Bamabodhini Society, now receive handsome prizes for proficiency. I think Government and such influential public bodies as the Social Science Association ought to co-operate in a matter like this and encourage merit with suitable rewards.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have placed before you six simple and practical suggestions which I hope and trust will be carried out, without any difficulty. I honestly believe that they are not impracticable, or Utopian. Nor do they require a large outlay of money to carry them into effect. If we sincerely feel the necessity of female improvement I think it is quite possible, if we set together to devise proper means and take prompt steps to give effect to these proposals. If we cannot do anything in the matter,

let us go to those who can help us with money or otherwise. Let us make proper and respectful representations to Government if needful. With private liberality, and aid and with the countenance and support of such a society as the Social Science Association, and above all with earnest and vigorous personal action much, I believe, may be done, and much I hope will be done—in due time.

A few words to my countrymen. Very little indeed can be said on such a subject like this. You have heard hundreds of discourses and lectures on female education. You all admit its necessity and its paramount importance. You entertain no doubt about that it would be doing injustice to you, it would be a scandal to your intellect to suppose that any appeal is needed at this moment to your feelings or your understanding in order to move and quicken you with a right motive to action in this matter. You all feel in your every day life, the necessity of giving proper training and education to the intellectual powers and moral sentiments of those who are near and dear to you. You cannot with impunity keep down your ladies in a state of mental, social, and moral subjection. Any attempt to do so will recoil upon you with a terrible rebound. It is a matter in which our interests are identified with those of our wives and sisters, and daughters. If we do them injustice and deny them their rights and privileges, such a course of conduct will inevitably and assuredly jeopardise our own best interests. (Applause) It is not merely a question of charity and fairness, that we should educate our ladies. Even if we were to view it from a lower stand-point, that of mere self-love, we would find that it is our interest at the present moment, and not merely our incumbent duty to educate and reform our wives and daughters. (Applause). What John Stuart Mill has said with reference to female society in England applies with

peculiar force to our country. "The time has come," he says, "when if women are not raised to the intellectual level of men, men must be pulled down to the mental level of women" (Applause). Or, to use the well-known words of the Poet-Laureate—"Woman's cause is man's, they rise or sink." "Together, dwarfed or god-like, bond or free" (Applause). Do you not feel in your daily life, that your wives and mothers are great impediments, sometimes, insuperable obstacles, in the way of your own intellectual and moral improvement? How many of you are anxious to go to England at this moment? But you cannot do so, because there are caste difficulties in the way, and the ladies of your household insist upon your strictly observing the rules of caste (Applause). There are many of you who would cut asunder at this very moment, all those ties and fetters which bind you to Hindu idolatry and superstition. But you dare not take a step in advance simply because your ladies are in your way. Give them education and they will prove helping hands. They will not only learn what is right, they will not only accept right convictions in their own hearts, but they will also render you valuable practical aid, and prove your companions in the higher enterprises of life. At present there are educated fathers and uneducated mothers, enlightened husbands and illiterate wives. There are conscientious and pure-minded and earnest-hearted fathers, but their daughters are being trained up by their superstitious mothers in the midst of falsehood and impurity. Try to remove such anomalies, and by educating your mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, bring them up to your level. As you are marching forward and endeavouring to place yourselves in the front rank of civilization, take your female relatives with you; then the amelioration of the country will be complete. At present only

half of the population of India is receiving culture and enlightenment. But the effects of such reformation among the male section of the community are to a great extent neutralised by the want of education among the women. By educating women we would reinforce our own energies, and with mutual co-operation elevate and reform our country. I do not exhort you to adopt rash and premature steps in furthering the work of female improvement. Do not force upon your ladies anything like false refinement. Do not endeavour to bolster up a meretricious refinement upon the unstable basis of outlandish customs. Try to establish the roots of reform deep in the soil of India. As in religious so in social reformation try to make the work of advancement, gradual and steady, but on the whole, national and enduring (Applause). Anything that you do from no higher motive than the imitation of foreign nations, must sooner or later die away. But if you call forth the latent resources of the native mind you will promote true and solid national civilization. (Cheers). It has been my good fortune to study the secret of English domestic purity and social happiness in England, and my observations, and experiences have fully convinced me that England is what she is on account of the superiority of her ladies. (Cheers). I had the pleasure to associate with accomplished and devout ladies in many cities and towns in England; and indeed I naturally felt inclined to transfer to my country those exemplary traits of character which I saw in them with my own eyes in that distant country. But how can that be done? Not if you merely imitate the exterior of English life; not if you try to adopt the superficial refinement of outward customs and manners, nor if you convulse Native society into spasmodic movements with fitful outbursts of youthful zeal.

It is your duty to enter into the spirit of true English refinement, and judge for yourselves whether England's greatness consists in observing the outward laws of social life, or in conforming to that system of moral and spiritual discipline under which every heart ought to be placed. Introduce that system of domestic discipline into your country. Improve the minds of your women and quicken their souls with true moral and religious impulses ; and bring them under the salutary restraints of moral discipline. Convince them that true emancipation means, deliverance from the fetters of corruption and untruth ; and that true liberty means the power to act freely according to the light of God in the soul, to discharge our duties to ourselves, to others and to our God without any hindrance. These are the great things which your women require at the present moment ; and if you teach them moral and intellectual discipline, if you make them understand the value of truth, and science, and religion, you will establish that social equality and purity without which Indian reformation would be merely superficial refinement. If you wish to give India true civilization, infuse purity and instil right ideas of duty into the Native female mind. (Cheers.)

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## PRIMITIVE FAITH AND MODERN SPECULATIONS.\*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The most superficial reader of ecclesiastical history cannot fail to observe the clear and unmistakable difference which subsists between primitive faith and modern belief. As we roll down the stream of time, we find that the broad spiritual life of the past has been gradually narrowed and the living intuitions and instincts of the early church have been, in the course of ages, ossified into lifeless and stiff dogmas. This distinction between ancient and modern faith is true of every system of religion. It is true of Judaism, of Christianity, of Mahomedanism, of Hinduism, and in short, of every system of belief whose historical or legendary narratives have reached us. In the early church religion was a living fire which burnt up in one general conflagration the accumulated errors and iniquities of centuries ; but in the midst of modern civilization we miss that living fire. Instead of a living and life-giving faith we see now a congeries of formal doctrines, cold abstractions and theological propositions—things which satisfy the intellect but do not always quicken the soul or influence the life of man. Religion was eminently spiritual and devotional in its incipient state, but it has grown logical and intellectual in the later stages of its development. The spirit required food and the early church supplied that food. But now religion is less a concern of the soul than of the understanding. It is treated not as a problem of salvation—of life or death, but a matter of history and chronology. The

\* Substance of an Anniversary Lecture by Minister Keshub Chunder Sen, delivered in the Town Hall on Tuesday, 23rd, January, 1872.

intellect is impelled to satisfy its curiosity, and enters into historical, scientific and metaphysical speculations with a view to arrive at an intelligent comprehension of spiritual truths and realities. We want to comprehend God ; we want to understand the true theory of the great hereafter. The nineteenth century wants knowledge and not blind faith. Secondly we find that primitive faith is more of a subjective character ; it has reference more to the facts of our religious consciousness than to outward objects ; it feeds and exalts the soul, it satisfies the requirements and wants of our spiritual life. In modern times religion is evidently more objective ; it kills the spiritual yearning of the soul instead of encouraging and satisfying it ; it turns man's attention not so much to the actual enlightenment and purification of the soul as to the men and things in the external world capable of producing such effects. There is not much introspection, but a continued looking towards outward objects and hankering after external help. Then again there is another distinction. People in ancient times used to stand in the presence of God and behold His majestic reality, the fullness of His purity and holiness, with all the vividness of direct perception. They stood before Him face to face ; they put direct questions and received direct answers. Communion with God was direct and immediate. Whereas on the contrary, in the present age, we have to approach God through books, through prophets, through teachers, through forms, ceremonies and symbols. We cannot, we dare not stand before the majesty of God, seated on His high and holy throne. We require extraneous aids to devotion ; we need mediators to help us in our daily communion and prayer ; we cannot offer our prayers direct to God Almighty. Access to God is mediate and indirect in the present age.

The great problem before us at the present moment



is to blend together the elements of religious life which we find scattered in ancient and modern times. One phase of religious life we see in the past and another in the present and unless these two are harmoniously blended together so as to form one indivisible spiritual unity, the great problem of salvation must remain unsolved. We must endeavour to effect a resuscitation and revival of the deep spiritual life of the early church in our midst taking care at the same time, not to lose or sacrifice any of those advantages which peculiarly distinguished this century. Whilst retaining the advantages of modern civilisation and refinement of thriving trade and advancing intelligence, we must at the same time endeavour, if possible to realize in our consciousness something of that inner spiritual life, spiritual fire and spiritual greatness which we find in the earliest type of faith. We must do justice to the past, we must also do justice to the present age. Truth is not found in its entirety in any epoch; we see its "broken lights" in history. All the fragments of truth must be gathered together ere the wants of the soul are fully met. That is true religion which satisfies both our intellectual and our spiritual cravings—which satisfies our yearning for what is visible, tangible and objective in religion and at the same time enables us to hold communion with Him who is unseen, invisible, far above all our senses, far beyond the reach of man's intellect. That is true religion which is at once intellectual and spiritual, emotional and practical, which can secure to us the combined advantages of modern enlightenment and civilization and primitive inspiration. The question we have to solve is how to realize this all-comprehending and perfect religion,—how to unite and blend together primitive faith and modern theological speculations. The essential characteristics of ancient faith may be

reduced to two simple truths—seeing God and hearing His word. I feel sure that every one here present whatever his creed may be, feels in the depths of his heart a craving for fuller and more direct knowledge of God. We cannot as men rest satisfied with mere secondhand inspiration. We cannot satisfy our souls by offering our prayers to a distant deity who lives beyond the clouds, who never condescends to dwell among us,—who receives our supplications and our petitions it is true, day after day, month after month, but who never vouchsafes unto us His children, full of imperfections, shortcomings and sins as we are a direct revelation of His will. Our natural sentiments of tenderness and filial love towards God make us anxious to approach Him in spite of His majesty and holiness, and to see Him as He is, so far of course as is consistent with our limited capacities. We instinctively strive to clear away all those difficulties and obstacles which stand between us and our Maker ; and to speak to our God, as a son speaks to his father, and hold direct and immediate communion with Him. Verily the heart panteth after God's loving face, and such longing is natural. But can we see God ? Do we see God ? Do we see Him around us, within us ? Is the word ' perception ' applicable at all philosophically or religiously to the unseen and invisible Creator of the universe ? Perhaps the spirit of the nineteenth century replies, without the least hesitation or scruples " No, none can see Him, man will never be able to see Him, because his reason is feeble and his powers are limited. The Infinite transcends man's highest faith." In fact the very idea of seeing the invisible God is pronounced foolish and superstitious, and against its very possibility the advanced intelligence of the age holds forth its indignant protests. Apparently there is logic enough in such objections and protests ;

but the irrepressible cravings of the soul require to be satisfied ; we must needs make an attempt to dispel the clouds which cover the face of the Almighty and veil it from our sight. Men at the present day universally believe in the doctrine of Divine Omnipresence ; every school-boy knows that God is present everywhere, that He is present in the temple of the human heart and that He occupies all space. East and West, North and South, are full of His all-pervading Spirit. And yet we see Him not. Where is my God ?—I cry. Echo replies ‘ Where ! ’ Neither from the mountains nor from the valleys, neither from the sun nor from the moon, neither from the above nor from below, do I receive any response. All nature is still, and God does not speak. It is true we see His handiwork ; His wisdom and skill we distinctly perceive,—but where is He ?

Science is justly said to be religion’s handmaid. But is this true in modern times ? Does science now fulfil its legitimate vocation ? Does it come to our help in our inquiry after the Living God ? Ask optics, ask hydrostatics, ask pneumatics—ask them if they reveal the light of God’s face to man. When we study these sciences do we behold God,—full of beauty, purity and goodness—as a Reality that can be felt and directly apprehended in our consciousness ? No. Instead of being religion’s handmaid, science has, in modern times, unfortunately become, in many instances, one of its sworn enemies. When we enter the temple of science we find no God to be worshipped there, but only abstract laws and forces. Science has peopled God’s universe with godless laws and godless forces. Every thing is traced in these days to secondary causes ; all physical phenomena are believed to originate in blind force ; all honour and all glory is ascribed to Nature. Here are certain forces operating according to particular laws, there

are other forces acting according to other laws,—that is the whole explanation which modern science seems to give of the diversified phenomena of nature. Is there nothing beyond these?—the unsatisfied soul inquires. False science says “No;” but true science returns an affirmative reply and comes to our rescue. With its aid we penetrate the clouds of mystery, we get through the adamant partition of forces and laws, and catch direct glimpses of the Divine face. In every natural phenomenon we perceive the hand of God. Surely it is a scandal to modern science that it conceals the Creator whilst it upholds the majesty of His laws, that instead of *revealing* Him it *veils* Him from our eyes, and conceals Him behind a thick wall of unintelligible abstractions. Destined simply to interpret and expound the volume of Nature, will science usurp the place and rob the glory of the Great Author of that volume? Will the scientific men of the age magnify the wisdom of Newton and Herschell and throw the God of creation into the shade? Can the astronomer while watching the wonders of the heavens fail to observe the Almighty hand that moves the planets in infinite space? No. True science cannot be godless. “An undevout astronomer is mad.” In all the operations of physical causes there is an in-working efficient First Cause, a Guiding Intelligence and an Omnipotent Will, visible alike to faith and to true science. The universe is not a vast mechanism moved by blind forces. The kingdom of God is not made of abstractions and generalizations. The Great First cause is not a thin ethereal presiding intelligence. Everywhere we behold beauty and harmony and order, at once physical and moral,—the bright reflection of the Divine Person. We see a Lawgiver and a law; we see the Master-mind of a King governing His countless subjects who own allegiance to Him.

and His laws. As soon as we believe in God's personality, so soon all our doubts and difficulties are dispelled and removed, and the needed assurance of God's immediate presence is fully secured. But this doctrine of Divine personality is the great problem of the age in which we live. Many of the most advanced minds and a greater number of scientific men of the age experience considerable difficulty in recognizing the personality and the Fatherhood of God. Constant contact with dead matter and abstract laws so deadens the heart of the student of science that he feels incapacitated from recognizing and loving the God of the universe as his Loving Father. It is no doubt easier to surrender one's love. It is far easier to say "I believe" than to say "I love." Power, Intelligence, Cause,—these are growing facts which extort assent even from the most stiff-necked sceptic. The men of the present day readily admit and accept these, but they hesitate to give their warm affections, their better passions and sentiments, their energies, and their lives into the hands of God Almighty.

Unless and until we acknowledge a personal God our nature is not satisfied. The deeper cravings of the soul are not gratified. Such belief is altogether natural. We must believe in God's personality if we are true to ourselves. Dare you deny the personality of man? Proclaim then the absurdity of all earthly governments and all human systems of administration. Proclaim the absurdity of all courts of justice and jails, of all codes of civil and criminal law and of all penal statutes, if you deny the personality and freedom of man. A belief in man's liability to punishment evidently presupposes a recognition of his freedom and his capacity to act as a free agent. Who can call in question a principle so plain, so universally admitted and acted upon as man's free

agency—a principle which underlies all modern institutions and the whole civilization of the present day? Now, if we instinctively believe in our own personality why shall we not acquiesce in the personality of God? He that has made our eyes shall He not see? He that has made our ears shall He not hear? May we not similarly argue—He who has made us persons, is He not a person? He who has distinguished man from the rest of the creation by making him a free moral agent, is not His Almighty Righteous Will invisibly regulating and controlling all physical forces, and swaying the destinies of nations and races. It is not merely as intelligence or power, but as a Living Person that God shines in the universe and is present in all space. Why then does modern science hesitate to acknowledge Him as such? Perhaps it is because we live in an age of reaction. Long has the world been pulled in contrary directions by two great evils, and now a strong tide of reaction has set in. The world has been carried too far by idolatry on the one hand and too far on the other hand by pantheism; and it appears that science has run away in a state of wild excitement and fear with a view to avoid the two extremes. The desire to see and worship a personal Deity led, amid the gloom of ignorance and superstition, to polytheism—to the construction of a pantheon crowded with myriads of gods and goddesses. Men knelt before stocks and stones, idols of clay, creeping things and four-footed animals. Such gross idolatry proved disgusting and offensive in time to advanced intellects, and they threw off its yoke. But in their anxiety to give up the remotest appearance of idol-worshippers, many in the course of time came to repudiate the doctrine of personality and pronounced the Great Creator and all created objects and beings as one identical substance. They converted God

into an all-pervading essence and so became pantheists at last. Perhaps scientific men of the present age, standing neutral between these two schools, have been so far prejudiced against each as to discard with its evils its excellencies too, and have scouted the very idea of seeing God as idolatry and the idea of His universal presence as pantheism. Hence, I believe, is their strong opposition to the doctrine of Divine personality. They see no difference between it and anthropomorphism, which clothes God with the passions and caprices of man. Such prejudices are wholly unfounded. True Theism shuns both polytheism and pantheism and safely stands on the central truth of a Personal God. We firmly believe that God's spirit fills all space and is immanent in the universe. He is the force of all forces, the power of all powers. He it is who ever breathes life into creation and ever upholds it. He is everywhere the in-working, the omni-active, Cause, the Life of all life, the central all-sustaining Energy. Yet is He neither matter nor a mere abstraction, neither the idolater's nor the pantheist's deity. It is the Spirit of the Infinite Person that fills all space and animates all objects and beings. It is His righteous Will that has created and still supports this mighty universe, and subserves His wise and beneficent purpose. We cannot rest satisfied with an endless concatenation of physical causes and material sequences. But we go further and further, beyond all possible causes that exist or may be conceived, till we come to that Central Divine Person, the source and cause of all created spirits, the origin of all matter, who rules to-day, as before, the world of mind and matter by His holy fiat. Our God is not the infinite extension of a holy something, not an ideal projection of our own consciousness, but a Person distinct from mind and matter, and yet immanent in both, and shaping

all things according to His will. Our God is not the impersonal *It* of pantheism, but the personal *He* of theism. In the recognition of such a God science and religion harmonize. In geology and astronomy, in anatomy and physiology, in all physical sciences, the well-balanced mind discerns not merely Wisdom, but a Wise and beneficent Will. We see the Living God in every flower that blooms and every star that shines. Every line we read on the page of nature is inscribed by the hand of God; every material object we deal with is sacred, being His handiwork. Behold the unity of science and religion !

It is said that when Abraham was " ninety years old and nine " the Lord appeared before him and said unto him " I am the Almighty God." We are also told that Abraham fell upon his face, and God " talked with him." It is said in another part of the Jewish scriptures, that when God wanted to reveal Himself to Moses, He descended upon mount Sinai " in fire." " Moses spake and God answered him by a voice." We also see it stated that the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, that God appeared before him, and entered into conversation and discourse with him, and that the one spoke and the other heard and answered. These and similar narratives of direct intercourse with God are said to have been enjoyed by Jewish prophets, fill the pages of the Old Testament. Similar accounts are found in the earliest scriptures of the Hindus. The ancient Rishi, we are told, held direct communion with God, and saw His glorious face.

No expression is more frequently used in the Upanishads than the ' perception ' of God (*dārshan*). It is said that ' the wise fully see God,' that He " manifests Himself to his worshippers, and that He is grasped by the soul as a fruit is ' laid hold of by the hand.' It appears that Hindu sages, not content with intellectual conceptions of the Almighty



or abstract contemplation of certain Divine attributes, sought earnestly, and indeed successfully, to behold the Supreme Spirit directly and to apprehend Him as a distinct and vivid Reality in their inner consciousness. The truly devout sat under the shade of their favourite trees on some high peak of the Himalayas, and saw the Lord above, around and below as a "burning fire." Nay, so clear was the perception that they rejoiced greatly in the presence of their God. Both then in early Judaism and Hinduism, and likewise in primitive Christianity we find clear evidences of something more than cold intellectual belief—of fervent faith and clear insight—of a perception of God's fiery presence. We see men inspired by the direct influence of God. The Holy spirit of God, descended upon men's hearts, revolutionised their whole being, put in new thoughts, new ideas, exalted conceptions and renovated energies, and in short transformed the whole life of those who received such inspiration, in the most mysterious manner. There is no deep philosophy in the process; every thing, if we read the records, seems so simple and natural. Man sees his Maker and discourses with Him. The father sits by the side of His child and the child sees him, and rejoices. Just as we see matter without any effort of reasoning, so the ancient prophets saw their God, and, communed with Him face to face. The whole process is described as a matter of marvellous simplicity and sweetness which touches our inmost hearts. But the question is—is there any truth in all this? Did the Rishis and prophets really see God? Is it possible for man to see God as I see the magnificent pillars and the beautiful lights before me? Is it possible to hear His voice as I hear external sounds? Surely, it is possible spiritually, but impossible physically. Those who believe that there is something more than

metaphysical in the allusions I have made, and are disposed to take them in a thoroughly literal sense, believe that God is not a spirit but matter. It would be a downright insult to the intelligence of the age, it would upset and shock all our ideas and instincts were we to recognise even the possibility of the invisible spirit appearing before men as a fire or as a light, and speaking to them by human voice. Happily we have left the age of such superstitions behind. God is a Spirit, and they that see Him must see Him as a Spirit. If the Lord descends "in fire," He descends in fire of holiness and purity, amidst the flame of inspiration, and every Moses that wants to see Him and hear His voice must ascend not Mount Sinai, but the hill of faith in his own soul, and so far raise the platform of his inner consciousness as to be in a position to catch the sounds of the spiritual world and behold the sights of the spiritual world. It is there that he sees God face to face, and not in the external world. There God's spirit appears like fire and inflames the soul with burning faith, warm love and enthusiastic aspirations. Yes, God approaches us as a burning flame, and we know His presence by its holy warmth and its enkindling effect on the soul. Yes, God is a light, but he that likens it to outward light may as well compare it to midnight darkness, to neither of which does it bear any analogy. He is no more like light than like darkness, for He is a Spirit. When therefore we are told that in ancient times men saw God, we are to understand that they perceived a fire or a light or a human figure not with their outward eye or their imagination, but that they felt the nearness of the Holy Spirit and vividly realised His solemn presence. This, I believe, is the whole secret of the perception of God. In this sense He is seen to-day, and can be seen more or less by every living man.

The process is miraculous and mysterious, yet natural and simple. Every child of God has direct access to Him and may see Him with his own eyes. Nay it is possible for the greatest sinner, if he is penitent and has faith, to feel the nearness of God in this manner. I say this is quite possible even in this age of material civilization and besetting rationalism. If we will humbly throw ourselves at His feet and anxiously pray for the light of His face, the Living God will reveal Himself to us, as he revealed Himself in times gone by to Abraham and Moses and Elijah and to our venerable Aryan ancestors. Tell me not this is impossible. What was possible before is possible to-day. Time cannot work a change in the nature of Him who changeth not though centuries roll away, nor in His dealings with mankind. He is what He was. If He revealed Himself to our forefathers, He will not, He cannot hide Himself to-day from our vision. To think otherwise argues absence of faith in the fixedness of the Divine economy. Nay there are evidences of an incontrovertible character in the life of many a living man which show that seeing God is not only possible in this age but a veritable fact. Such perception, I am convinced, is the life-blood, the strength and the joy of these men. Their souls would hardly live for two minutes and would languish and wither away in doubt and despair but for this inspiring and comforting realization of God's presence. The mere intellectual acquiescence in a distant and absent deity cannot sustain or save us amid the perils and temptations of the world. We must be ever surrounded by the awfully sacred presence of the Saviour if we wish to be saved; we must ever live in His delightful company if we wish to be delivered from the sorrows and troubles of the world.

Let us then cast away the shadows of law and force and bow not before electricity or magnetism ;

let us not allow our imagination to rest on a chemical or mechanical First Cause ; let not fiction or abstraction set up by false science interpose between us and our Maker ; but let us in all physical phenomena directly apprehend the Infinite Person and worship Him as our Supreme Father and Mother, our everlasting Friend in the temple of science. We shall then find that God is not only True and Good but also Beautiful, and shall see and love Him in all His works. And thus amidst all our modern scientific speculations we shall realize the primitive faith of our forefathers, and like them " Behold the beauty of the Lord."

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.\*

EIGHTEEN centuries ago a voice was heard in Judea which thrilled the hearts of those who heard it. " Repent ye," said John the Baptist, " Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The great prophet of Nazareth who followed, and to whom John stood in the relation of a precursor and a pioneer, said the same thing. He too raised the solemn cry—" Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." We are told that " he went through every city and village preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." When he sent forth his twelve disciples what was his charge to them ? He exhorted them to go in all directions and carry the message of the heavenly kingdom to the uttermost parts of the world. Eighteen hundred years have borne witness to the untiring zeal and earnestness with which that doctrine

\* Substance of an Anniversary Lecture by Minister Keshub Chunder Sen, delivered in the Town Hall on Saturday, 24th January, 1874.

has been preached in various forms and languages by the ambassadors of Christ. How many books and tracts have been written setting forth its profound principles ! How many pulpits have week after week reminded men and women of its reality and its sweetness ! How many martyrs have heroically stood forth in the cannon's mouth, and in the face of overwhelming foes given up their lives in order that that great truth might be magnified and the advent of the kingdom of heaven hastened. How many millions of Christian hearts have daily looked up in prayer and devoutly repeated those sacred words—"Thy kingdom come !" One may seriously ask what is the upshot of all these movements—what has come out of all these prayers and longings and the ceaseless toil and struggle of centuries ? Is that kingdom of heaven a reality, an accomplished fact to-day, which prophets prophesied and preachers preached, and for which martyrs joyfully shed their precious blood ? Is there any country, any race or community in the world where the idea has been realized ? Is there any religious sect which makes even an approximation to it ? I ask modern civilization in vain. It gives no favourable response. Even the popular Christianity of the age blushes when pressed for a reply. We see the kingdom of heaven nowhere ; no, not even among the most advanced nations in Christendom.

The earth is still earthy, and is far from being heavenly. Do we deny the triumphs of Christianity ? Do we ignore civilization, enlightenment, social refinement and all the features of progress which belong eminently to the age ? No. I do with profound gratitude admit all that Christianity has done and modern science achieved to promote the mental, moral and social advancement of mankind. But I say nevertheless, the kingdom of heaven has not yet yet been realized on earth.

Nothing can be further from my mind than to underrate the services which Christianity has rendered to society or ignore with irreverence and ingratitude the high moral benefits it has scattered throughout the length and breadth of the habitable globe. That it has worked wonders and revolutionized society few will deny who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Nor can we pretend to question the marvellous inventions and discoveries which we owe to science, and which have added so greatly to our material comforts, and contributed to our intellectual and social elevation. Nay in every department of modern thought and enterprise we perceive indications of progress. The citadels of ignorance in many a land have been broken into atoms, prejudices and errors have been dissipated, and nations long sunk in the abyss of hopeless degradation are fast rising to eminence and fame in literature and science, trade and commerce, law and government. All this notwithstanding, I persist in saying that the kingdom of God is not at hand. Let us take the highest type of religious culture and fellowship yet realized in Christendom or elsewhere, even there alas ! the kingdom of heaven is not. There may be virtue and sanctity in the individual of a most commendable character ; there may be the highest kind of friendly alliance among the community ; yet the ideal of God's kingdom is far from being realized. Christianity, it must be admitted, has failed to vanquish the world's sin and wickedness to such an extent as to convert the world into the holy kingdom of heaven. Whatever else it may have achieved, it has signally failed in this. It has reformed the world, but has not made it heaven. When I say that Christianity has proved a failure, I do so because I wish to glorify and vindicate the noble ideal of its Founder. The *real* is unworthy of the *ideal*. Christianity is unworthy of Christ. One may ask why we

should engage in the discussion of a Christian doctrine, — what interest can this mixed audience representing various nationalities and creeds have in a doctrine preached by Christ several centuries ago for the benefit of his own followers and disciples? I can assure you that it is not a denominational dogma. It is a universal and vital truth, in which all nations, races and tribes are equally interested. So vital is it that there is no salvation without it. In fact salvation means nothing, but admission into the kingdom of heaven. We are all seeking that kingdom. All our hopes are centred in it. Humanity has longed for it in all ages, and all its struggles tend to its consummation. There is no salvation, individual or national, without it. The kingdom of heaven is the world's hope and joy and salvation. To realize the kingdom of heaven is our destiny and mission. We live for this purpose. We do not regard the possession of earthly virtues or the attainment of the world's highest standard of morality as our being's end and aim. Heavenly holiness we seek, not worldly virtue. Born to inherit heaven, that we seek naturally and instinctively and nothing short of that will satisfy us. Nor is it only the perfection of individual holiness we are striving after. The paradise of the selfish soul is not our heaven. Not where individual souls enjoy God in a state of selfish isolation, and each singly dwells in His love, but where all are united together as a holy and loving family, there our hearts wish to be. We pant for heavenly communion. We anxiously wish that such communion should be established throughout the world. We do not wish that heavenly joy and purity should be established in our own hearts alone, but amongst all nations and races, and in all lands. Do we seek only self-sanctification? No. The world's conversion into heaven is our ideal of highest progress. How the banner of the King

of Heaven shall be unfurled everywhere, and His throne established in every heart ought to be the aim of every man and woman. This is the salvation in which not only Christians, but all men are equally interested, and to this all nations are moving. What is this kingdom of heaven? What does it denote? Let us proceed to evolve its latent meaning. "The kingdom of heaven"—these are simple words, whose significance seems too obvious to need elaborate explanation. We all know what a *kingdom* is, and we have also some idea of what *heaven* is. But when the entire phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," is taken into consideration, we must confess that it denotes a very lofty idea which has no counterpart in reality and of which we can hardly form a definite conception from the visible things of this world. When the cry was first raised in Judea, 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' men marvelled saying one to another—what does this mean? And we too in the nineteenth century say unto each other with astonishment—what can be the meaning of this strange expression? Where is this kingdom?—we ask. Is it a reality that can be seen, or is it a mere idea whose realization we have yet to see? If it is an idea, let us analyze it and unfold the principles which it involves. Let us unlock it and see what treasure it contains. Let us go into its depths and perceive the beauty and grandeur which may be revealed there. Let us all vividly and distinctly trace the details of that beautiful picture of the kingdom of heaven which the Lord holds up before the eye of faith. Before describing what the kingdom of God is, let us first determine what it is *not*. It will be readily admitted that it is unlike anything we see in this world. Whatever it may be it is not earthly, and bears no analogy to earthly institutions. If it means an exalted and happy condition of humanity, it does not represent any form



of worldly happiness—physical or intellectual. “The kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink.” It has nothing to do with the pleasures of the senses. It lies far from the regions of physical happiness. Food and raiment, gold and silver, the gorgeous finery of outward refinement cannot be identified with it. The material prosperity which men so highly esteem and devotedly pursue under the name of civilization is not a thing of that kingdom. It deals not with the material and visible treasures and enjoyments of the world. It is something spiritual, altogether spiritual. It is not “lo here ! or lo there ! for behold the kingdom of God is within you.” It is an invisible reality which must be sought in the domain of the spirit, and not in the world of matter. It is not a kingdom of the *earth* but the kingdom of *heaven*. You must not then look to the outside world for materials wherewith to construct the kingdom of heaven. It refuses to be built with human hands or with the brick and mortar of the world. It is a Divine and heavenly institution and is built with spiritual things in the inmost soul, so that the eye seeth it not, neither doth the worldly man comprehend it. I hope I have said enough to guard you against identifying the kingdom of heaven with any form of worldly advancement, however perfect, or forming an idea of it with the aid of analogies drawn from human institutions. Let me now proceed to unfold the positive side of the idea and explain what the kingdom of heaven is. In the first place it is a kingdom. It is a system of government with the Almighty at its head. It recognises Him as the universal King, and all mankind as His subjects. It is not like any earthly forms of Government, republican, aristocratic or monarchical. It acknowledges no human ruler or rulers. Nor is it based upon the changeable and capricious codes of civil and criminal law which men manufacture to repress crime and

preserve order. It recognises no other law than the supreme and immutable moral law of God—the law of righteousness and love, which it seeks to enforce for the promotion of peace and purity in the hearts of its subjects. In the kingdom heaven all men and women offer allegiance and homage to the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and dwell happily together under His sway, secure against the ravages of inward and external foes. Secondly the kingdom of heaven is a social confederation, a community. It not only represents the union of individual souls with the Divine Ruler but also the union of those souls with each other, and the exchange of mutual sympathies and services among them. It is a state of society with a complete code of social laws and customs, usages and institutions all of a heavenly character and infinitely superior to what we see in even the most elevated form of social existence on earth. There humanity completely ignores selfishness and necessarily assumes the form of a social organization. There all individuality lives in the community, and life is altogether social. The souls of all are united together by the ties of a compact and indissoluble fellowship and they find joy and purity in discharging their duties to each other, and promoting mutual happiness. But the kingdom of heaven is more than a society. It is a church, in which the Holy God reigns supreme as the object of universal worship. That church acknowledges only one God, and suffers no created being or object to share the glories and prerogatives of Divine majesty. Those who inhabit the kingdom of heaven not only form a community but a religious community. Not only are their hearts tied, but their souls too. No denominational or sectarian differences separate them or foment jealousies and rancour. But all are united in the Church Catholic, whose Head is the One True God. Lastly, the kingdom of heaven is a sweet home

—the home of God's family. There all men and women are brothers and sisters. They dwell as one united family recognising God as their common Father, and serving each other with all the zeal and joy of domestic attachment. There services are rendered unto each other not under legal, social or religious ordinances, but as a labour of love. No duty is hard or dry, no work irksome. In that holy family love is the only creed, the rule and motive of all virtue, the source of unity and joy ; love alone is " the fulfilling of the law." I have presented to you the general outlines of the Kingdom of heaven, and have shown by analogies what it is like. But its deeper life and constitution we have yet to comprehend. There is perhaps one word only in the English language which can express it, the essential and crowning idea of the Kingdom of heaven. That word is *Unity*. Unity is at once the life and beauty of God's Kingdom. Let me explain myself fully. In the first place I must urge upon the necessity of establishing complete unity in our relations to the Deity. Man has rebelled against his Maker ; the human will has estranged itself from the Divine ; the son has waged war with his Father. To reconcile these differences, to adjust their mutual relations, to establish peace and harmony between humanity and divinity is the object of religion. This is the great problem of salvation—to make the two one. Man is then saved when he foregoes the attitude of hostility and becomes one with God. Sanctification means unification. The essence of salvation is atonement. In this world man is at war with God ; in the Kingdom of heaven he is reconciled to and united with his Maker. The union of humanity with Divinity is the chief characteristic of that Kingdom. But against such union many will perhaps protest as altogether presumptuous and impracticable. Is it possible for the soul with all its frailties, weaknesses

and impurities to be united with the All-holy, whose very presence it is unable to bear? Will man, that vile worm of the earth, audaciously aspire to such heavenly union? The very idea seems to many to be preposterously absurd, and is said to argue arrogance and pride. I have not the least hesitation in declaring the imputation to be holy unfounded. The union of the human spirit with the Divine represents not self-sufficiency but self-sacrifice, not self-exaltation but self-abasement. He to whom millions bow in this wide world inculcated this deep truth in all his precepts and throughout his life. It was the very basis of his character, the burden of his prayers and aspirations. His life and teachings may be summed up in that lofty prayer—"Thy will be done, not mine." Need I say that we should all pray and live in that spirit? It is this sacrifice of self-will, this absorption of the human in the Divine will, this spiritual unity which I desire to impress upon you. The first thing demanded of every pilgrim to the kingdom of heaven is self-surrender—unconditional and absolute self-surrender. Without this there can be no admission into God's kingdom. There the Lord is the Supreme King, the Paramount Power. All who desire to live under His rule are bound to acknowledge Him as their only King and Master: those who wish to dwell in His territory must vow entire and unswerving allegiance to His law and authority. He that retains aught for himself or obeys another master is unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Half-hearted or fractional obedience is not accepted there. The whole heart and soul, riches and possessions, honours and privileges must be unconditionally surrendered to the king before an inch of ground in His Kingdom can be occupied. Nay all desires and inclinations which are in the least contrary to the Divine will must be sacrificed, and that will

thoroughly accepted as the only rule of life. We should not only do nothing which the Lord forbids, but we should not even cherish for a moment any wish repugnant to His will. We should identify His will with ours and extinguish self-will completely. The soul ought to be able to say in all circumstances, and in the face of all temptations and trials,—Thy will be done, not mine. This self-surrender is only another name for loyalty which the Eternal Head of the heavenly kingdom demands of His subjects. It is easy to understand how there can be no kingdom where the subjects recognise not the authority of the paramount ruling power, where sedition lurks in their hearts and leads to rebellious deeds or desires, where they are ever planning the overthrow of the royal throne and the unfurling of hostile banners. That surely is no kingdom where anarchy prevails among the people, and each follows his own peculiar wishes and proclivities, where all are drawn away by the repellent forces of self-will instead of being drawn unitedly towards the central will of a common sovereign. If we acknowledge a king we cannot rebel against his authority; if we are his subjects we must obey his will, not our own. We must live as loyal citizens under his banners. If then you wish to enter the kingdom of heaven, you must not retain the least trace of self-will in the heart, but recognise, in all things God's will as your own will. There is yet a deeper idea in this doctrine of unity which requires to be evolved and expounded. I have spoken only of the unity of will. This however is not enough. Not only must man surrender and sacrifice his own will on the altar of true loyalty to the Master, but he must completely sink his higher life in the Divine life. Not only must there be a unity of will but likewise a unity of character and life in man's communion with Heaven. There are many who seem

ready to obey the commandments of God and prove loyal to Him in their thoughts, words and deeds, and who earnestly strive to eschew whatever is repugnant to His will, but they would take credit to themselves for all their virtues. They believe that whatever is good in their lives is their own goodness, and in claiming it as their own they glorify themselves. There may not be a wicked and rebellious spirit in them ever waging war with the heavenly King ; they may be free from deliberate and habitual disobedience. So far their wills may be in harmony with the Divine will. But if there is no disunion, no antagonism of will, there is no unity or harmony of spiritual life. If they are not self-willed they are self-righteous. They may have no will apart from the Divine will, but they have wisdom, love, strength and purity apart from Him. They have surrendered the will to God, but their virtues they claim and retain as their own. Against this species of secret but widely-prevalent pride and self-glorification I must warn you. Seriously reflect on this point. You should remember that whatever is good and right in us cometh from God and is divine, not human. We are apt to congratulate ourselves on our virtuous dispositions, our charity and purity, our devotion and piety. Nothing is more common among us than to talk of *my* wisdom, *your* love, *his* probity, and *our* virtues. We speak of our character as we speak of our property ; we look upon it as acquired by, and appertaining to, ourselves. There can hardly be a graver mistake or one more harmful. Truth is neither yours nor mine. Goodness is neither yours nor mine. All truth, all goodness is God's. It comes to us from Him, but it is His. He is the eternal fountain of righteousness, and from Him small streams of purity are ever flowing into the hearts of men. If we are truly wise we are wise in His strength. Our

highest love is only a drop from the Ocean of Love. All our purity is derived from Him. If there is real happiness in our higher life it is a reflection of His joy. Thus wisdom, strength, love and joy emanate from the Source of all that is good and great, and descend into our hearts from heaven. There is no holiness in man or woman apart from God. Every little truth that your lips pronounce is the truth of God ; every little act of charity your hands perform proceeds from Divine love. Behold that devoted apostle of truth. How he weeps for the sins and sufferings of the world, how he sacrifices his personal enjoyments and interests to bear witness unto the True God among sinners, and at last gives up his life only to save others from spiritual death ! The world praises his childlike faith and humility, and gives him credit for his truthfulness, his resignation and self-sacrifice. Ah ! the world is mistaken. What is glorified in him is not *his*, but God's. Holiness is essentially Divine. It can never be human. It descends from heaven where it is born ; it is not an earthly growth. In the most degraded sinner whatever particle of truth or piety may be found is of God, though it may be surrounded by the iniquities of a life of infamy. One single truth uttered by lips contaminated by habitual lying is the purest truth of heaven, and ought to be honoured as such. There can be no sanctity in us apart from God. We not only become pure with His aid, but we become pure in His purity. People admit the former, but hesitate to accept the latter truth. They would ascribe glory and honour to God for helping their sanctification and for imparting to them strength and light without which they could not attain purity and renounce sin ; but when they have attained purity they are apt to regard it as their own and pride themselves upon it as something belonging to themselves. It is

this fatal mistake which by creating an imaginary distinction between earthly and heavenly purity, between human and divine holiness, lowers virtue, teaches man egotism, and distances the best souls from the heavenly Father. It prevents communion even where there is the highest devotion and piety. It makes men bring down truth and holiness from heaven in order to enjoy them as earthly treasures on earth instead of drawing themselves nearer and nearer to heaven. Those who are happily freed from this delusion and are above the vulgar error of crediting the world with a separate kind of truth not heavenly, are privileged to enjoy the benefits of true communion with the God of heaven. In seeking truth they only seek God, for in Him is all truth. In acquiring salvation they only acquire the riches of the Holy Spirit. Whatever is good in their character they refer to the Source of all goodness. In sin they are separate from God ; in truth and purity they are at one with Him. Their righteousness is not only God-given, but Godliness itself, the spirit of the All-holy breathed into them. Hence in everything good and true in their own lives they feel conscious union with Him, and rejoice in a profound unity of spirit. They feel that to be good is to live in God. Those who cherish a rebellious will against the Most High or take credit to themselves for their own virtues are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. If ye seek admission into that kingdom you should consecrate yourselves entirely to God and live in Him with unity of will and unity of spirit. The doctrine of unity admits of another application which is equally important, and which necessarily follows the principles already enunciated. There must be unity not only in our relations to God but also in our relations to each other. I have spoken of the former, and shown in what way true and complete spiritual



unity may be established between humanity and Divinity. I shall now proceed to explain the nature of that unity which should subsist between man and man before they are accepted in the kingdom of heaven, which makes all mankind *one* in that holy kingdom. Were we to look around we would be convinced even by a hasty and cursory glance of the sad extent to which differences prevail among mankind and divide God's family into hostile sections. The spirit of jealousy, discord and antipathy is seen everywhere. Brother against brother, sister against sister, such is the picture of the 'human family.' We see individuals, arrayed against individuals, communities against communities, and nations against nations. There are political, social and domestic, literary, scientific and philosophical divisions. There are endless differences of opinion, taste and judgment besides those which spring from ill-feeling. To establish love and unity in this scene of universal strife and contention appears to be a hopeless task. Then again when we take into account the endless schisms and sects in the religious world, we cannot help thinking that the most stout-hearted apostle of peace must despair. That men should attack each other under the influence of carnal passions we can easily understand. That pride, jealousy, covetousness, lust and anger should lead to enmity and war, and break the human race into fighting factions does not excite surprize. But when wranglings and wars instead of ceasing increase a hundredfold in the name of that which professed to bring peace and supply an antidote to war, the prospect of anything like union in the world becomes terribly gloomy, and we wonder if such a thing is at all possible. Why, there has been the fiercest war and the most horrible massacre and bloodshed in the name of religion. Is it not the mission of religion to establish peace and good-will

among men, and annihilate all unholy differences and divisions among the children of God? Why then do men and women under the auspices of their respective churches and in the name of God, fight with each other? Why do they set up their little shibboleths to anathematize and persecute each other in the name of religion? Men quarrel in the world under carnal promptings; even when they profess to live above the world and take shelter in the heavenly abode of religion, even there alas! they quarrel and fight with each other. Where shall we seek and find love? Expelled from this vile world it took refuge in the religious world. But lo! there too it has been victimized. Even among the best and most advanced minds of the same church there is not true fellowship. They may have drawn themselves away from the worst forms of animosity and rancour, they may agree in opinion; but is there true unity among them?

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## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.\*

GENTLEMEN,—It is rather unfortunate that the Theological Institution occupies the last place in the programme of our Anniversary festival instead of the first place as in the last year. Our energies are almost exhausted. Naturally in the very beginning the Existence of God occupies the interest of Theological students. You may think it is mere waste of time and energies to dwell upon such a simple and general truth as the existence of God; but I think our salvation and our beliefs in the attributes of God and

\* Substance of an unpublished lecture by Minister Keshub Chunder Sen, delivered in the Albert Hall, on 29th January, 1879.

the Next World depend upon this simple truth. In fact our present belief in God cannot save us. Properly speaking, we do not know God and we do not believe that God exists. We are not real believers in God. A historical God is not the Real God, it is a mere phantom. What our imagination conjures up is not God ; that even is not God which nature reveals. But that is God whom we can see. The Real God is seen as plainly as we see ourselves and the world. We must place our belief in God upon direct evidence or eyesight. I will apply the same demonstration in reference to God as we do to material objects. All arguments *a priori* or *a posteriori*, are feeble. It is therefore useless to wade through them. Do I believe that you are here ? I do, because I see you with mine own eyes. But I do not see the logical God so directly. But it slips away. The least trial makes such a god disappear. Having driven away the false god you may rush to the Real God. The entity of a thing must depend on evidence. All existences reveal themselves directly to a vigorous consciousness. It is possible to open a new line of arguments :—Home Department, not Foreign Department. Looking to the stars above, we gather in evidence of design ; and theologians says, "Through nature we arrive at nature's God." But this evidence is foreign. I like to go into myself, *i.e.*, homely evidence. Suppose I was blind, and could not see the external things. Going again to the *a priori* that we have the ideas of the Infinite, Causality, moral Restitution. But can these intuitive ideas satisfy us always ? Then those who are deficient in logical powers cannot see God. How a sinner is to see God ? We must study our own nature. Socrates preached "Know Thyself." He thought if a man knew himself he knew everything. Shakespeare said, "Be true to thyself and then thou wilt be true to all." Here philosophy and poetry

agree. Without self-knowledge nothing else can I understand. Unveil self and you will unveil all things. Reveal self and everything is understood. What is this self? Imbecility, something which has no power of its own, something which is ; but which is *made* to exist ; a consciousness of a being who is called into being. To be conscious of self is to be conscious of dependent self. This is the first incipient stage of consciousness. This some degree of vitality, whether it be wisdom, power or love, is limited. It may be very great power, but there is always a limit to it ; I cannot be conscious of an independent being. In every putting forth of energy, I wish, I could inflate myself ; but I cannot. There is a tension. All nature seems to say ;—"Thus far shalt thou go." Mine arms rest upon another's arms. When a man feels this dependence then he has proclaimed himself a theist. Atheism is impossible. The very consciousness of self repudiates atheism. The very tongue which declares itself infidel is not an atheist. Its natural words must be theistic. There is a latent Being, a God hidden in man. The small muscular chest and every drop of blood reveal God. We do not want a God of antiquity. We want a present, a modern God who lives in us. I am going into biography, not into history. Belief in a Present God quickens me, animates my body and soul. Philosophy rests upon our consciousness which teaches us that self is kept up by another who is the Self of self. Can the eye see without the aid of Divine force ? We cannot live unless we are every moment enlivened and quickened by God. Our life is borrowed from God. It is something given and may be taken. God's power like a stream from heaven moves this wonderful locomotive, the human body. Take away the vital spark and it will die. This is a thing to be felt and not to be inferred logically. Infidel soul, why dost thou pride in borrowed dress ? We are

made to see, feel, &c., our existence is altogether above our will. When we turn we are turned by some One else. Now then, Gentlemen, you may say, blind men cannot see ; but despair not. If a vivid perception of God is not a fact to-day, it will be a fact to-morrow. Brush the inward eyes, as soon as they will recover their strength you will enjoy bright and clear sights of Divinity. *I never sought evidence of my own self.* It is an evidence of Home Dept. not of Foreign Dept. Is it an elongation of my imagination that you are present here ? We do not arrive at the reality or the entity of an object by logic. Are our eyes bright enough to see God ? Blind men ask the passersby which is the road ; but they can hear. "There is the road to salvation" saith God ; but we cannot hear. God saith, "I am here." What is a musical instrument to the deaf ? If both blind and deaf, where is the hope ?—Touch. God is omnipresent, but we cannot see Him. We see an infinite vacancy. You strain your optic nerves ; but you see the Lord nowhere. You see His objects ; but you do not see Him. He is enshrouded in clouds. In such a stage of thought people run to the *Bible*, the *Koran*, or the *Vedas* &c. ; but the natural theists have recourse only to their *touch*. His inner sense of touch feels a blaze that enkindles him. He does not know what it is ; does not know its name ; but he feels it. He knows not ; but he is a theist, a little soul, a young theist, he feels God in darkness. He feels he is all tied. He feels his every movement controlled by a superior Being. He feels that some One is constraining him. I may not call Him God. It is the attitude of dependence. Impotent tiny hands, dare ye touch God ? Who art Thou, O Spirit, I touch thee with my hand ? It is a hand that has touched Divinity. This hand belongeth to God. I am another Being's being, a prisoner in His hand, a dependent

being. The power of thought, the power of feeling, all belong to God. God works through all systems. Every man is a born theist with the load of theistic evidence. I must lacerate, cut self into pieces if I were to disbelieve in God. Self and God are so indissolubly connected. If I say there is no God in me, I die. Connect God with yourself. Fancy a man cut away from the primary power. This stage of speculation that a blind and deaf man touches the inmost Spirit is the most certain revelation of God. God exists, because He revealeth His existence to the inmost sense of my touch or to the deepest seat of my life. I know God liveth, because my life comes fresh from Him.

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## BRAHMO SOMAJ.

AT a Special Meeting of the Members of the Brahmo Somaj, held at the Somaj premises, on Thursday, the 3rd of October last, to consider the best means of promoting education in this country.

Proposed by Babu Boykunto Nath Sen, and seconded by Babu Jadab Chunder Mukerjee, that Babu Shama Churn Sircar take the chair.

The Chairman then explained the object of the meeting, and regretted the absence of his esteemed friend, Babu Debendro Nath Tagore, whose valuable suggestions would have greatly furthered the object of the meeting.

The Secretary, in explaining the circumstances which led to this meeting, read an extract from the letter of Professor F. W. Newman to the Secretaries of the Calcutta Brahmo Somaj, dated 2nd March 1861, and published in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, No. 213, wherein that gentleman suggests the neces-

sity of making an appeal to the British Public to enlist its sympathy and support in the cause of education in India.

Babu Keshub Chunder Sen then rose to move the First Resolution. He said :

It is necessary that we should understand aright the paramount importance of the object which has brought us together this evening. We have assembled to consider the best means of promoting education in India, and thereby conferring on it the blessings of intellectual, moral, and social amelioration. How noble this object is I leave it to you to judge. A question, however, suggests itself to the inquiring mind—why have the Brahmo Somaj taken the initiative in this great movement? What special considerations have led them to come forward in this matter? Judging from the past history of our Church, it is evident that this education movement is novel and anomalous. The apathy which our Church has hitherto displayed to matters concerning public good, and the distance at which it has kept itself from national enterprizes may lead people to wonder at our present proceedings, and feel a curiosity to understand the special interest we have in the education of India. But those who have entered deeply into the spirit of Brahmoism, and have appreciated its real character, must confess that it behoves us more than any other class of our countrymen to enter upon this undertaking. Possessed of a religion which demands the consecration of the whole life to whatever is good and true, we are expected to struggle with the utmost forthputting of our power to promote the real welfare of India. Some have identified our creed with unpractical mysticism. Some have called us a race of thinkers. But from the eyes of such the real truth is hid. That truth is this. Theism is the religion of life. It seeks to develop all the energies

and sentiments of man. It imparts muscles to the hands, love to the hearts, a strong intellect to the mind, and piety and faith to the soul. What our Church has hitherto done has been only a preparation ; its due progress various circumstances have contributed to impede. The world has yet to see what it is capable of achieving. Brahmoism, brethren, is destined to become a power in the world. Times however have already materially altered. A light has dawned upon the face of our church. Our consciences have been roused from dormancy, and stimulated to activity by the solemn calls of duty coming from all quarters. We have learnt to feel that our mission is immense as the ocean and endless as the sky—that duty, in its manifold varieties, forms the object of our life, and whatever interferes with duty must be eschewed by us. If Brahmoism is the religion of love, we must mix with the good of all classes and communities. Whether it be the promotion of social reform, such as widow-marriage or abolition of caste, or of political good, we shall try to give efficient support to whatever is calculated to extend the cause of truth and advance the happiness of man. Universal brotherhood—co-operation with all classes for general good—is our principle. Let us then strive with commensurate energy to make our Church what it ought to be—a source of real usefulness—foregoing all that apathy, inconsistency, and compromising policy, which have hitherto made us Brahmos the butt of merited censure, derision, and contempt. Hypocrisy is not ours, brethren : hypocrisy is not ours ; (hear, hear) empty professions, barren declarations are not ours. Duty, sacred and solemn duty, is ours. Firmness of purpose, steadiness of resolution consistency of character,—these constitute a genuine Brahmo. It is the recognition of these truths that is bringing our Church into the arena of public



enterprises. How to convert beliefs into practices—words into actions, is uppermost in its thoughts. It is fast descending from the heights of theories and abstractions to alight on the terra firma of tangible works of national utility. Unprecedented as this movement is in the history of our Church, it is simply one which it is our duty to undertake. We are here but to discharge *duty* to our country—a duty which we have hitherto neglected, but which Brahmoism loudly calls upon her followers to fulfil. I devoutly trust that this meeting, eminently important as it is in itself and indicative of the exalted attitude which our church has begun to assume, will be the prelude to many such meetings and movements in future.

Perhaps it will be said that the great work of national education belongs to Government and should be left to its hands alone. I would ask is the Government bound to do everything for us? Is it even to bake our bread? No one will deny that it has done much for our education; and if withholding from it the tribute of gratitude for what it has done, we simply urge complaints against it for what it has not done, we shall assuredly be guilty of a grave dereliction of duty. We are bound to acknowledge with fervent gratitude the benefits it has conferred on our country by bringing the light of Western ideas to its shores. Let the Government do what it can and should do; but let us not neglect to do what is peculiarly our own business. The Government loudly calls for our co-operation; and unless such a co-operation take place—unless the State and the people help each other—native education will never be carried to a desirable extent. Shall I be told that we have neither the ability nor the needful means to carry out so gigantic a work, and must therefore stand aloof? An opinion like this can be held only by those who do not understand the force of a sense of duty. If we have been summoned

to meet here solely by the idea of moral obligation, that idea shall be to us our strength and means. What a solemn and awful term is DUTY? It might enter the ears of the worldly-minded as an unmeaning impotent sound, but imagine the force with which it falls upon the conscience of a Brahmo. Can we believe that we are soulless, nerveless beings, destined to be dragged by extraneous impulses through the haphazard contingencies of life—now intimidated by frowns of guardians—now lulled to sleep by the love of sordid indolence—now damped by the selfishness of worldly considerations? Once think of *duty*, brethren, and all the noble spirits and energies of the soul will be enkindled. (Hear, hear.) Once look within and you will find there is something in us which is not earthy—something which resembles God. Stimulated by a sense of duty, we shall fearlessly embark on all important and useful enterprizes—overcome all difficulties—meet all opposition and persecution with unflinching fortitude and heroism—and, so long as the last drop of blood in the arteries is not dried up, struggle manfully for the cause of truth and progress. Give your respective quotas, whatever your position and means shall allow and your sense of duty may dictate,—and the edifice of India's amelioration will be upreared. Enough has been said, my brethren to show that we owe a solemn duty to India, and must zealously labour to discharge it.

I shall now proceed to take a cursory review of the present state of education in our country, in order to ascertain the special wants which we shall have to remove. The education which is imparted in Government schools and colleges is of such a nature that while it makes the *alumni* swallow a deal of facts, fail in establishing in their minds a permanent taste for literary or scientific pursuits. It hurries them through the elaborate routine of a *cramming* system.

Hence we see that although many a student figures prominently in the college, and attains diplomas and degrees, he hardly exhibits or retains a spark of his excellencies in after life. Between the student and the man what a marked difference ! A positive taste of study not being procreated or fostered the habit of study generally terminates with the college career. Where is all that history and geometry, and logic, and philosophy which the student so thoroughly mastered ? Wrecked perchance in the vortex of *Keraneedom*. Alas ! the brightest scholarship often loses all its brilliance on the *Keranee's* table. (Hear, hear). The fact is that, however much Governmental education has achieved to extirpate the prejudices and corruptions of Hinduism, it has done little to fill up the chasm thus created with a positive taste for some thing better and nobler than what has been abjured. It is necessary therefore to adopt some means to keep up a habit of study—to make the effects of education lasting—in a word, to make education what it ought to be, *viz the means of developing all the 'sentiments and energies of man*. Secondly : that much even which education has done is confined to the upper orders of the people. The masses of the people are still immersed in ignorance and idolatry, and compared with their overwhelming number the small minority of the enlightened dwindles into insignificance. Behold the length and breadth of India, and you will at once perceive how ineffectual is the resistance which the few schools located here and there offer to the force of ignorance. What has been done up to this time to educate and improve the *people* ? Nothing. And yet so long as *their* position is not elevated, India will be but in the infancy of civilisation ; their prejudices will continue a stumbling-block to progress. It is therefore incumbent on us to see that the light of education, instead of being confined within the houses

of fortune's favourites, is extended to the cottage and the mechanic's shop that it may bless the penurious and the indigent,—for every child of God is by birth-right entitled to its benefits. Lastly : The degraded condition of our females challenges our serious consideration. Debarred from intercourse with educated society, confined in the corrupt atmosphere of the Zenanah, they squander away their time and energies in frivolities unworthy of their rational nature. Centuries of spiritual despotism have so far cramped their views and paralyzed their energies as to leave scarcely a single noble aspiration in their minds. No country on earth ever made sufficient progress in civilisation whose females were sunk in ignorance. In fact the actual position of the females is an unfailing index to the social *status* of the nation to which they belong. However, elaborate arguments are not needed to convince us of the peculiarly abject condition of our females : our own daily experiences enlighten us on the point, our homesteads are the scenes of their sufferings. I simply ask you, brethren, whether, when you see your wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, weltering in the mire of idolatry, suffering the hardships which crafty priests impose on them, betraying profound ignorance of their real destiny, and themselves bitterly complaining of their degrading position, can the heart prevent the outbursts of commiseration from finding vent in an abundant flow of tears? (Hear, hear) Alas ! they are helpless : they live in a state of virtual slavery ! Words cannot pourtray the miseries to which Hinduism has consigned their lot. A wilful neglect of so many of God's children, tender-hearted, weak, and obedient, nothing can vindicate. Extremely inhuman as it is, it is also a most reprehensible violation of duty. If therefore, we cherish a desire to elevate India to a fitting place in the scale of nations, we must try to

liberate our females from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition.

Such are the deficiencies in the present state of education which we have to supply. Can you, I ask, become indifferent spectators of this heart-rending scene, and withhold your patriotic aid upon base worldly pretexts? India's hopes are concentrated in you. Formidable difficulties have to be surmounted—a hard battle has to be fought—ere our object can be accomplished. But shall we be discouraged by such consideration? Shall we forget the advantages and encouragements which are around us? Are not the signs of the times singularly hopeful? Who among us can deny that scarcely a day passes in which something or other does not turn up indicative of a tendency towards reform? Activity, earnestness, patriotic anxiety, are springing up and are discernible in almost every purlieu and alley of this great metropolis. Are there not unmistakable symptoms of progress in the North-West, in Madras, and specially in Bombay? Are not these very encouraging to us? Indeed the times in which we live are stirring. India is fast rising out of her degenerate and debased condition—intellectually, and socially, as well as politically. Although the late terrible mutiny perpetrated an amount of mischief which the heart cannot contemplate without sorrow, and has subsequently engendered a violent race-antagonism calculated not only to embitter the feelings and loosen the ties which bound together the Anglo-Saxon and the native, but to impede the material improvement of the country at large—yet that very evil has proved a blessing to India. How mysteriously does Providence bring good out of evil! It is the mutiny that has opened the eyes of England to the actual condition of the natives of India, which the character and principles of a prior policy in administration concealed from her view

(Hear, hear). Providential as England's connection with India is, she has a great mission here. Now, she has come to a right appreciation of that mission and the solemn responsibilities which it involves. Thanks to Lord Canning's clemency-policy—thanks to the sagacity of His Lordship's co-adjutors—our country has been saved from a deadly war and its catastrophes, and is placed in a position of peace and safety, from which she expects to thrive with rapidity in political and general prosperity, receiving that support and encouragement from England which, when duly awakened, she is always ready to bestow. Most emphatically do I assure you that a true British heart, is ever a generous heart. (Hear, hear). Race-hatred, race-antagonism is foreign to its nature. Full of magnanimity and philanthropy, and sympathy with the weak, and friendless, it is ever ready to countenance, encourage and help whatever tends to the welfare of India. In this stirring period of transition, with so many hopeful circumstances around us, can we, as responsible guardians of our country's interests, remain any longer in a state of apathy? India is hourly plying our consciences with stirring appeals, and rousing our generous feelings to move strongly in her behalf. Alas! her teeming millions, intellectually and morally impoverished, prostrate and debased, loudly cry for sympathy and protection! Behold the wide-extended scene of destitution, suffering and helplessness around us, and say can a patriotic heart connive at it. Arise then, brethren of the Brahmo Somaj, and with adequate earnestness and perseverance fight for India's welfare. India educated, exalted and regenerated, will glorify trumpet-tongued and million-voiced the protecting hand of Britain and the providence of the Most High. (Cheers).

He then moved the first resolution which was as follows :—

That this meeting, while it acknowledges with feelings of gratitude the exertions of the Government to promote education in India, desires to record its sense of the inefficiency of the present system of education, and the necessity of introducing a better and more comprehensive one.

The motion was seconded by Babu Suttendro Nath Tagore and carried unanimously.

Babu Conoy Loll Pyne moved the second resolution :—

That the Brahmo Somaj prefer an appeal to the British public to enlist its sympathy and support in the cause of native education.

Babu Debendro Nath Tagore, Junior, seconded the motion which was carried *nem con.*

The chairman then called upon the secretary to read the Appeal which was adopted with unanimous consent.

Babu Ishwar Chunder Nundy moved the third resolution, *viz.*

That the Managing Committee of the Brahmo Somaj, be requested to carry into effect the above resolution.

The motion was seconded by Babu Nilmoney Chatterji and carried unanimously.

The chairman then rose and addressed the meeting on the importance of education, and the necessity of making vigorous attempts to elevate India to that position of literary and scientific eminence, which she once enjoyed.

Proposed by Babu Tarruck Nath Dutt and carried by acclamation—

That the best thanks of the meeting be accorded to the Chairman.

The meeting then broke up.

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**BRAHMO SOMAJ.**

AT a meeting of the Brahmo Somaj held on Sunday, the 1st of December 1861, at the premises of the Somaj, to consider the best means of relieving the sufferers from the epidemic in the villages of Baraset, Tribeny, Hallysahur, &c.

Babu Debendro Nath Tagore in the Chair.

After prayers were offered to the Almighty, the Chairman addressed the meeting as follows :

We have met together this evening to relieve the distresses of our fellow brethren. In this one act we shall fulfil both the duties inculcated in the fundamental doctrine of our creed—"Love God and do the works He loveth." It is not for us to indulge in a mere nominal love of God, which shrinks from active virtues—from righteousness and charity. We should have that real love towards Him, which joyfully and earnestly strives to do all good works which He bids us do. True Brahmic worship is the union of the love of God and the performance of the works He loveth. I cannot describe the joy which this meeting awakens in me, for in it I behold an unmistakeable evidence of the progress of Brahmoism. When I see that so many have readily availed themselves of a simple announcement to come forward with no other object than to discharge their duty to God and man, and thereby to glorify Brahmoism, I cannot but joyfully conclude that the True Church is making considerable progress. On all sides I see signs of progress, and with my whole heart I hail them. The epidemic is making terrible ravages in Lower Bengal, and words cannot describe the horrors of the scene. Unless prompt relief is afforded, many a village will perhaps be depopulated. In order to effect this object, we ought to set on foot a subscription among ourselves to give medical relief to the



sufferers. But this Relief Fund is not the only thing needed. Some measures ought to be adopted to inquire into the causes of the epidemic and the means of averting it permanently, else we would be merely remedying the evils on the surface, without laying the axe at the root of them. This cannot be accomplished unless a representation be made to Government to that effect. Thus by personal exertion, as well as by recourse to Government aid, we shall be enabled by God's grace to mitigate the evils from which our country is suffering. I now request you to take these matters into your best consideration.

Babu Konoylall Pyne and Suttendro Nath Tagore then made some remarks on the frightful nature of the epidemic and the necessity of giving prompt succour to the distressed, after which a Committee was formed, consisting of the following gentlemen :

Babu Debendra Nath Tagore.

Pundit Ishwar Chunder Vidyasagur.

„ Dwarka Nath Bidyabhusan.

Babu Peary Chand Mitter.

„ Krishna Das Paul.

„ Debendro Nath Thakoor.

„ Nilmoney Chatterji.

„ Boyconton Nath Sen.

„ Kally Krishna Dutt.

„ Keshub Chunder Sen.—*Secretary*.

It was resolved, that a subscription be set on foot for giving medical relief to the sufferers from the epidemic, and that a representation be made to Government for making arrangements for the prevention of the recurrence of such epidemics.

Babu Keshub Chunder Sen then rose, amidst hearty cheers, and said to the following effect :

The papers I hold in my hands, and which will shortly be presented to you to invite your contributions to the proposed Fund, are indeed very valuable.

I rejoice to rise with these papers in my hands, for I rise to advocate a noble cause—the cause of humanity, of truth, and of Brahmoism. I rise to discharge the sacred duty of exhorting you to make a combined effort to alleviate the sufferings of thousands of our dying countrymen. What a splendid scene is presented to my view ! How impregnated with moral loveliness and sublimity ! I see before me a good gathering of earnest souls who have assembled together to fulfill one of the most important duties of life—viz., to save the lives of fellow-men. The Resolutions that have been passed are well suited to the requirements of the case, and will, I trust, if carried out, fully answer our object. It is indeed necessary that we should make arrangements for according prompt medical aid to the sufferers, and with this view collect sufficient contributions from amongst our own body. But besides these arrangements for *pro tem* relief, it is incumbent on us to adopt measures for effecting a permanent sanitary improvement in the places infested with the epidemic, so as to prevent its recurrence. To accomplish this object we ought to memorialize Government, and I hope and trust our prayer will be responded to. The generous anxiety which the Government has often manifested in such matters to promote the welfare of our country is, I presume, not unknown to you. The extent of aid it rendered on the occasion of the famine in the North-West, and the means it adopted to find out its cause and palliatives, the commission it has appointed to inquire into the causes of cholera which prevails in the North-West, and the Small-Pox Commission which it appointed sometime ago in this metropolis, bear abundant testimony to its paternal care over us. Do not these measures display a firm resolve to minister to our wants ! I am fully persuaded that if we display an earnestness in the cause of

patriotism, and a preparedness to do all that in us lies for the advancement of our country, instead of eternally parading its reforms with the lip and the pen alone, we shall find the requisite aid from Government, and all the grounds of complaint which now exists of its apathy will be removed. I am also sanguine in my hope that our church will in no distant day enter into political confraternity with the State, and with its aid and co-operation carry out the various measures of reform calculated to effect the material as well as educational and social aggrandisement of India.

But, brethren, the main work in the present case lies upon our own shoulders. If we simply make a representation to Government we shall have gone through the easy and mechanical portion of the work. That would not evince the spirit of Brahmic charity. We cannot rest satisfied until we have, with all the means in our power, personally exerted ourselves to relieve the sufferers and wrung out of our own pockets all that we could spare for so generous a cause. In this we can bring forward no worldly pretext to justify our indifference or lukewarmness. We say of Brahmoism that it is the Religion of Love and Brotherhood : and surely brotherhood were a mockery, and love a lie, if we did not keep our hearts and hands always open to the relief of suffering humanity. We must have that broad, universal, all-absorbing charity which is ever engaged in diverse ways in the fields of benevolence, patriotism, and philanthropy, if we aspire to deserve the name of BRAHMO. Nor can we say, we have given our money on several occasions ; our means are limited, and we cannot therefore respond to any fresh calls upon our purse. Rather let us say—thanks to Brahmoism that our straightened means are to be consecrated to so noble and sacred a cause.

What a variety of evils—intellectual, moral, domes-

tic, social, political, are harassing our ill-fated country. Indeed, they have accumulated to a magnitude from the sight of which the stoutest heart recoils with awe. Besides these, how many physical evils have of late come in, such as cholera, famine, inundation, and fever to make the history of this country full of catastrophes. How great is her misery ; how indescribable her sufferings ! But grieve not, India ; despair not : there is yet hope for thee—thou hast Brahmoism. In the midst of thy multiplied misfortunes and afflictions her hands are outstretched to ennoble and exalt thee. Whatever might have been the impression which ten years ago the character of our church led to, I trust time has opened the eyes of the public to the important fact that Brahmoism is the only hope for India : the progress of Brahmoism is identical with the prosperity and greatness of our country. It is said in some quarters that our Church is mainly composed of young men and boys ; and this circumstance is urged as an evidence of the weakness and decline of the Somaj. It is certainly true that of late we have had a pretty large number of young men in the membership of the Somaj, and in our public meetings we generally see them foremost. But does this circumstance at all derogate from the importance and worth of our Church ? Does it not rather tend to the glory of Brahmoism ? When proofs are not at all wanting to show that Brahmoism is doing real good to the country : when it is patent to all that our Church is identifying itself with social and moral reforms, what matters if the Somaj has been employing the agency of young men. It is not grey hairs or wealth that we want ; what we want is real earnestness in the cause of truth ; an enthusiasm which regardless of the paltry considerations of wealth, intelligence, or age, consecrates all to the service of the Lord in a spirit of humble resignation.

If with the aid of young men our church has been enabled to inaugurate a movement for the promotion of education in India ; if with their energy and zeal it has taken the first step towards the establishment of social usages and customs upon sound principles ; if with their instrumentality it has succeeded in disseminating, far and wide, the living principles of its creed, which shall one day burn up the stupendous fabric of Hinduism in one general conflagration ; if from their limited resources it exacted thousands of rupees for the relief of the famished people of the North-West ; if, in short, with their aid it is progressing in importance and usefulness, who shall deplore their connection with the Somaj ? Who will not rather hail with his whole heart such youthful accessions to our Church ? With such facts before us are we not irresistibly led to the inference that Brahmoism is full of life and fire. It has the power of arming youth with unconquerable enthusiasm and ardour ; it can convert rags into rich vestments, clay into gold, and turning simplicity into wisdom. Surely where there is deep faith in the Omnipotent Lord, and a thorough reliance upon His fatherly providence, young men and boys can work wonders, and poor men achieve triumphs, which opulence and age will perhaps shrink from. If it is the wish of the Highest that young men shall promote the cause of Brahmoism, let us say with one accord " Lord, let thy will be done." And let us on our part, becoming perfectly indifferent as to whether we are poor or illiterate, zealously endeavour to fill our souls with the sweets of faith, love, and purity, and discharge those varied duties to God and man for which we are accountable, and the neglect of which neither our limited age nor intelligence will, justify. What the young men of our Church did on the occasion of the famine, a few months ago, is still fresh in my

memory. It is a lasting monument to the glory of our Church, and in my life I shall never forget it. Did they not go about from door to door soliciting contributions, begging their friends, their fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, their kinsmen, and neighbours to unite in that sacred work. Did they not in noble self-denial part with many a comfort of life and even some of the necessities of life to feed their starving brethren? Did not even their wives and sisters in blessed sympathy readily part with their ornaments? And you know, my brethren, how many hundreds of rupees accrued from the proceeds of the sale of those articles thus granted by the self-denial of a few young, but earnest votaries of Brahmoism. Is not this circumstance demonstrative of the power of truth as it is in Brahmoism and the insignificance of age? I myself have personally witnessed such exhibitions of youthful charity and self-denial, and oh what a fund of joy have they afforded me! Glory be unto Brahmoism that she has achieved so much in the way of saving the lives of famished men by the agency of self-denying youths! I trust, brethren that in the present case of epidemic that spirit of righteous self-denial will be imitated. As Brahmos we should look not to the amount of our gift but to the spirit in which we give it. We must be satisfied that what we contribute conforms to the dictates of conscience. Let not then any worldly considerations interfere with the strict discharge of duty. Just contemplate my friends the nature and extent of the sufferings caused by the epidemic. At this moment while I am addressing you, hundreds and thousands of our countrymen are being ruthlessly carried away by death for the want of medical aid. Oh the spectacle is awful to contemplate. Misfortune has spread its sable mantle over a vast extent of the fair lands of Lower Bengal, and death is ringing

its awful knell in many a house ! Whole families are being swept away, large tracts of land are being depopulated, scenes of domestic felicity and of the bustle of business activities are becoming barren wastes. Behold that small wretched hut ; a helpless family lie in it entirely prostrated, and crving for relief ; father and mother, brother and sister gaze at each other's face ; reciprocate their unprofitable sympathies ; they faint, they gasp, and they die, saying—but, alas ! no commiserating heart is there to listen to their last words—" Is there none to befriend us ? " An indigent mother dies while sucking her babe, the tender little creature unconscious of its mother's fate still hangs on her breast, and still seeks in it that nourishment which it can no longer afford, till—oh ! the heart faints to think of it—ruthless animals make prey of both. Is there any one so callous as not to shed tears ever such a heart-rending scene ? Go up the river, and you will see here carcasses piled to an enormous magnitude, with which gaunt beasts are revelling in shocking wantonness—there funeral piles by scores are arranged in horrid array, and are sending immense volumes of smoke to the skies ; here the bewailings of a whole village are penetrating the vaults of heaven, but alas ! to no purpose ; there those in a convalescent state are crawling along the ground to the river side to satisfy their thirst. No more, no more, my brethren, enough of this sad portraiture. Hasten, hasten at once to the relief of your helpless countrymen, your dying brethren. They demand your sympathy and support—they solicit your brotherly aid. Let us respond to their calls, if there is a heart in us ; if conscience has not altogether ceased to lift its voice. Compare the comforts of your lot with the destitution and agonies of the poor sufferers. Now while warm clothes are protecting us from the chill cold weather, while rich

dinners, agreeable conversations, and the varied luxuries of comfortable life are awaiting us, how indescribable are their miseries ! They have no doctors to attend on them, no medicines to cure their diseases ; and where they have through medical aid saved their lives, they are pining away those dear-bought lives in starvation. Are we not ashamed of our prosperity and affluence, and comforts and luxuries ? Come then "heart within and God o'er-head," to save the lives of the unfortunate sufferers from the epidemic. If it has pleased our Gracious God to visit our country with such afflictions, He has on the other hand, summoned us to extend our helping hand to alleviate them. Let us then faithfully discharge our obligations to man and God. And in so doing we have simply to imitate the mercy and loving kindness of our Father as the venerable Chairman has already said. In all things is He our only Guide and Councillor : Our Everlasting Friend, and the Standard of Righteousness.

Merciful Father, Who art always present with us, enable us to consecrate our energies to Thy service. Thy love to us is unbounded. By day and night, in prosperity and afflictions, we are enjoying Thy protection and paternal care. All is vanity in this world. Help us therefore to turn our hearts away from its evanescent joys and resign ourselves wholly to Thee. May our hands be always engaged in works of usefulness, and may our humble lives unceasingly glorify Thy name. We do not despair of our country's well-being, for Thy merciful hands are working beneath all its calamities and misfortunes. Give us, Loving Father, to discharge our duties to Thee and our brethren, with constancy and faithfulness and with prayerful reliance upon Thy mercy. Good Lord, teach us to love Thee.



After the collection was over, thanks were voted to the Chair, and the meeting broke up.

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SECRETARIAT**

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